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Primary Foreign Languages: Beginning teachers' narratives of beliefs and practices.

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Doctor of Philosophy

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University of Winchester.**

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ABSTRACT

Primary Foreign Languages: Beginning teachers' narratives of beliefs and practices

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This research was undertaken within the context of a significantly shifting educational landscape, and at a time when primary schools in England were dealing with the demands presented by curriculum reform in the shape of a new National Curriculum (DfE, 2013). This reform saw foreign languages securing statutory status in Key Stage 2 (KS2) for the first time since the national curriculum was originally introduced in 1988 (HMI, 1988).

The primary aim of this research was to critically explore the developing articulation and conceptualisation of the beliefs and practices of a group of undergraduate primary trainee teachers, specialising in PFLs. This study sought to examine the extent to which the trainees' practices, as they entered the profession, reflected a sense of congruence or dissonance with their beliefs. Integral to this research was a desire to expose that which both supported and inhibited the development of their understanding and eventual practice in this area of the curriculum.

A narrative inquiry approach was adopted as a means of placing the trainee participants at the centre of the research process (Nespor, 1987; Wideen et al., 1996; Loughran, 2007). Patchwork reflections (Winter, 2003) and narrative interviews were employed as research tools, and a Greimasian (1971) semiotic approach was applied to the analysis of the trainees' narratives.

Findings reveal the extent to which trainees' pedagogic beliefs and practices in PFLs, which were strengthened over the course of their training, were subsequently eroded as they entered the profession. The low status of the subject, and the countless demands of the classroom, acted to constrain their practice and discouraged them from attempting to innovate or teach in ways that were congruent with their beliefs. This study, then, makes a valuable contribution to our understanding of how we might successfully support beginning teachers to: firstly, develop powerful, research-informed beliefs about teaching and learning which they are able to translate in concrete ways into their practice and, secondly, empower them to be able to make a positive contribution to PFL provision as they enter the profession.

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Glossary of Acronyms

ALL – Association for Language Learning

CILT – Centre for Information on Language Teaching and Research

ELL – Early Language Learning Initiative

FL – Foreign Language

ITT – Initial Teacher Training

IU – Intercultural Understanding

KS1 – Key Stage 1

KS2 – Key Stage 2

LEA – Local Education Authority

L1 – First Language

L2- Second Language

NACELL – National Advisory Centre for Early Language Learning

NFER – National Foundation for Educational Research

NQT – Newly Qualified Teacher

PFL – Primary Foreign Languages

PPA – Planning, Preparation and Assessment

TA – Teaching Assistant

TDA – Training and Development Agency

CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

Reinforcement and conditioning guarantee behaviour, and training produces predictable outcomes; knowledge guarantees only freedom, only the flexibility to judge, to weigh alternatives, to reason about both ends and means, and then to act while reflecting upon one's actions. (Shulman, 1986:13).

1.1 Research Background and Context

This research was undertaken within the context of a significantly shifting educational landscape and at a time when primary schools in England were dealing with the demands presented by curriculum reform in the shape of a new National Curriculum (DfE, 2013). This reform saw foreign languages securing statutory status in Key Stage 2 (KS2) for the first time since the national curriculum was originally introduced in 1988 (HMI, 1988), and the introduction of this new subject into the curriculum is undoubtedly presenting considerable and on-going challenges for many schools. These challenges are manifested particularly in relation to a lack of teacher subject knowledge (Legg, 2013; Woodgate-Jones, 2015), variability in pedagogic approach and curriculum design (Cable *et al.*, 2010; Tinsley and Board, 2017), and a lack of status and commitment attached to foreign language learning in favour of what are perceived as more pressing demands on teachers' time (Driscoll, 2014). Arguably this research was therefore conducted at a critical time for Primary Foreign Languages (PFLs).

My research interest evolved from my current professional role as a teacher educator working in the context of university based Initial Teacher Training (ITT). As coordinator and tutor for Primary Foreign Languages modules on both primary undergraduate and postgraduate routes, I work with a large number of trainee teachers, from those with little or no formal language learning experience to those with higher formal qualifications (A-level or degree-level) and / or who express a particular interest in language learning. Watzke (2007) argues that those with an interest in the development of foreign language (FL) teachers should focus on 'the relationship between preservice preparation and in-service implementation' (p75) of pedagogy and yet, in that regard, I have come to recognise the particular tension which exists in my role. On the one hand I am committed to fostering a climate which values research-informed practice and which seeks to foster the development of trainees' own personal beliefs

about good PFL teaching and learning. On the other hand, however, I am conscious of the need to meet the conflicting demand of preparing the trainees for the realities and very real pressures of school life. Supporting trainees in connecting theory and knowledge about primary foreign language pedagogy with their experience in the classroom remains an on-going challenge.

This challenge is compounded by the fact that, despite its now statutory status in England, PFLs are not seen as a priority in many schools and therefore the vast majority of trainees are afforded little or no opportunity to observe practice, let alone engage in teaching FLs themselves (Macrory and McLachlan, 2009). They regularly report that this is because foreign languages are often taught by a specialist during the teachers' planning, preparation and assessment (PPA) time or because the class teachers themselves lack confidence in teaching this aspect of the curriculum. Interestingly, even when trainees are fortunate enough to have a teacher tutor who acknowledges an interest or some expertise in the language, they admit that, for the most part, other priorities take precedence in the weekly timetabled curriculum.

My direct work with trainee and beginning teachers, and my knowledge of the school based experiences they have in relation to PFLs, have raised concerns for me about the actual implementation of foreign language teaching in our classrooms. Driscoll *et al.* (2004) argue that 'teachers' beliefs about the subject and about teaching and learning have a major influence on the way the subject is conceptualised, the planning and assessment of learning, the complexity of subject content and the inclusion of cultural references' (p36). If we accept the view that the implementation of PFLs in the classroom depends on the philosophy underpinning it, then it would seem imperative that teacher educators understand the way in which ITT programmes might influence and shape the beliefs and eventual practice of those embarking on a career in primary teaching.

Cortazzi (1993) suggests that the aim of research in the field of education is 'to make sense of teachers' thoughts, actions, experience and attitudes by studying the formation of their professional consciousness through their experience' (p14). There is, however, a recognition by some scholars (Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 1990; McEwan, 1995; Goodson and Gill, 2014) that attempts to understand teaching practices are often abstracted from teachers themselves and

regarded as 'low status' in educational research. Eisner (1991) contends that the toughest measure of research in education is the extent to which it influences the improvement of teaching and learning and yet van Manen (1990) questions whether researchers are taking this responsibility seriously and if the teachers and children (for whom it is assumed such research is intended) are reaping the rewards. If the fundamental purpose of educational research is to support or improve classroom practice then the perceived preoccupation with merely describing or evaluating it will arguably need to be superseded by a renewed effort to understand it (Nespor, 1987). This requires that the teacher, their beliefs and their practices are placed at the centre of the research process (Wideen *et al.*, 1996). Indeed, it is Loughran's view that:

a pedagogy of teacher education requires a deep understanding of practice through researching practice. In order to develop such an understanding, it is important not to be constrained by a teacher educator's perspective but to actively seek to better understand the perspectives of students of teaching (Loughran, 2007:1).

This study is aligned with this view in that it reveals the formation and growth of trainee teacher beliefs about good practice in PFL teaching and learning. These beliefs offer a backdrop against which their eventual practice is explored and reflected upon. In addition, this thesis also examines the influences which inform and shape beginning teachers' individual beliefs and practices over the course of their specialism modules in PFLs and into their NQT year.

1.2 Research Aims

It is recognised that the landscape for ITT is changing rapidly, with routes into teaching becoming increasingly varied and shifting from university-led to school-led programmes (Nunn, 2016). This study, however, focused on a group of twelve primary trainee teachers specialising in Primary Foreign Languages in the context of a more conventional undergraduate programme with distinct patterns of university-based learning, complemented by three extended school placements. This research adopted a narrative inquiry approach as a vehicle through which the development of their knowledge and beliefs in relation to this aspect of the primary curriculum could be explored. In addition, this thesis examined the extent to which the trainees' practice, as they entered the profession, reflected a sense of unity with their

understandings and beliefs or was in conflict with them. Through the exploration of trainee teacher beliefs and practices in this way, this research exposed 'the invisible strings of power or influence' (Huberman, 1995:131) on beginning teachers' practice. In doing so this thesis supports an understanding of how teacher educators might be able to contribute to, and lay the foundations for, the development of understandings and practices which will support the improvement of foreign language teaching in our primary schools.

The primary aims which framed this research were:

1. To critically evaluate trainee teachers' developing articulation and conceptualisation of their beliefs and practices for PFLs.
2. To explore the changing relationship between beliefs and practices in PFLS for trainee teachers as they become teachers.
3. To analyse congruence and dissonance in trainees' narratives of beliefs and practices.

The aims were addressed in the research by considering the following research questions (RQ):

RQ1. How do trainees articulate their beliefs and practices for PFLs during their programme?

- a) What aspects of the module design do trainees perceive as being most influential in their development as PFL teachers?
- b) What factors do trainees articulate as being enabling or disabling to the development and enactment of their beliefs for PFLs in the classroom?

RQ2. How do the beliefs and practices of trainees for PFLs evolve and change as they become newly qualified teachers?

- a) What factors do teachers articulate as being enabling or disabling to the development and enactment of their beliefs for PFLs in the classroom?

The first research question specifically supported the exploration of the developing articulation and conceptualisation of trainee beliefs over their taught course. The second question was designed to provide further insight into any congruence or dissonance which was revealed in the trainees' narratives of beliefs and practices after they had graduated.

1.3 Thesis Outline and Organisation

This thesis is organised into six chapters. Chapter 2 presents an in-depth review of the literature which charts the shifting landscape of early foreign language learning in recent years. The conflicting rationales put forward for its inclusion in the primary curriculum and the diversity of teaching approaches, which are argued to pervade this aspect of the new statutory KS2 curriculum, are also analysed. A critical examination of the factors which are believed to shape and influence teachers' classroom practice and the complex relationship which exists between them then follows. This chapter concludes by situating this discussion in relation to teacher education and considers the potential contribution of University-based ITT programmes to the development of beginning teachers' pedagogic understandings and practices.

Chapter 3 presents the researcher's ontological and epistemological beliefs as a backdrop to the methods and methodological choices framing this research. Patchwork reflections (Winter, 2003) and narrative interviews are critically explored as research tools and an examination of narrative inquiry as a complex yet arguable powerful research paradigm follows. An exploration of semiotic theory and, in particular a Greimasian approach to structural narrative analysis as a means of revealing the deep level of narrative meaning (Greimas, 1971), concludes this chapter. Ethical considerations pertinent to this study such as power relationships and the researcher's role in the interpretation of meaning are threaded throughout this chapter.

Chapter 4 draws on the patchwork reflections of the twelve trainee participants and presents and discusses the prominent themes emerging from these reflections in relation to the aims of the study. Chapter 5, however, presents the narratives of three trainees as separate stories. For each story, the trainees' patchwork reflections and subsequent two interviews are subjected to semiotic analysis, and are presented and discussed as a means of portraying how the trainees' individual beliefs and practices are shaped over time and in relation to their specific contexts.

In Chapter 6 the threads of this thesis are drawn together, key issues are summarised and their significance explored so that implications for both research and teacher educators' practice might be considered.

CHAPTER 2 – LITERATURE REVIEW

The shifting landscape of PFLs (Kirsch, 2008; Martin 2008; Driscoll, 2014) and the conflicting rationales advanced for early foreign language learning (Driscoll, 2015; Satchwell, 2006) have arguably contributed to the low status of foreign languages as a curriculum subject (Jones and Coffey, 2013; Tinsley and Board, 2017) and the diversity of teaching approaches evident in many primary schools (Jones and McLachlan, 2009; Cable *et al.*, 2010). This chapter begins by examining these issues as a means of providing a necessary backdrop against which my work in preparing PFL specialist trainees to deal successfully with these challenges can be considered. It is recognised, however, that the influence of ITT (Initial Teacher Training) programmes on the development of beginning teachers is often unclear (Hargreaves, 2012). This is, in part, due to the complex relationship which exists between teachers' pedagogic beliefs and the social context in which they find themselves (Olafson and Schraw, 2002; Pinar *et al.*, 2008). This chapter, therefore, considers the extent to which these factors are believed to shape and influence teachers' classroom practices. An understanding of these issues is critical if, as teacher educators, we are to strengthen our influence on beginning teachers of PFLs and help to bridge the gap between their university-based learning and their school-based practices. Discussion, therefore, concludes by critically exploring the extent to which research suggests that teacher educators are able to empower beginning teachers (Biesta *et al.*, 2015; Soini *et al.*, 2015) to improve the foreign language learning opportunities for children in their own classrooms and wider school contexts.

2.1 The significance of a changing landscape on foreign languages provision in the primary sector

England has historically experienced considerable variation in primary foreign languages provision (Johnstone, 2003) with what Sharpe (2001) describes as 'chaotic and uncoordinated' (p172) levels of effort, enthusiasm and resources being committed to it at national and local level in recent years. Despite the long-standing tradition of the inclusion of foreign languages in the independent state sector curricula (Sharpe, 2001), it was not until the late 1960s that the possibility of extending this opportunity to young children in the state primary sector was considered seriously by government ministers (Mitchell, 2002). At this time government backing and, significantly, funding were provided to a pilot scheme involving 17,000 children

which sought to explore the feasibility of teaching French to children from the age of eight (Martin, 2008).

Less than ten years later, however, this pilot scheme, rather than being extended more widely, was, in fact, brought to a swift conclusion with foreign languages ceasing to be taught in most primary schools and local education authorities (LEAs) almost as quickly as they had started (Sharpe, 2001). This demise was directly attributed to the longitudinal evaluation of this scheme undertaken by Burstall *et al.* (1974) on behalf of the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER). Whilst acknowledging some benefits of the project, in particular the sustained, favourable attitudes of the pupils towards their language learning (Kirsch, 2008), the overall conclusions drawn by the study were unequivocally dismal (Sharpe, 2001). When comparing the attainment at age thirteen of the children involved in the pilot with a control group of learners who had begun learning French on entry at secondary school, it was judged that there was 'no substantial gain in mastery achieved by beginning French at the age of eight' (Burstall *et al.*, 1974:243).

Criticism was subsequently levied at this report, raising issues of research design as well as questioning pedagogic approaches such as the perceived lack of planned opportunities for progression into KS3 (Gamble and Smalley, 1975; Buckby, 1976; Hoy, 1977). Hoy (1977:25), in fact, questioned the entire premise of the evaluation, criticising what he deemed to be a focus on 'profit and loss' rather than a more forward-looking emphasis on exploring conditions for success. Despite these pockets of resistance, however, the next few decades were marked by a dearth of foreign language learning opportunities for young children in England (Martin, 2008; Driscoll, 2015).

It was then not until the late 1990s, when the Centre for Information on Language Teaching and Research (CILT) coordinated the Early Language Learning Initiative (ELL), that the profile of language learning at primary level was raised once again (Hood and Tobutt, 2015). The ELL project was developed 'to promote the provision and quality of modern foreign language learning in the primary sector' (Martin, 2008:6) with its identification of best practice among those remaining schools and LEAs where foreign languages had managed to survive being used to develop non-statutory guidance and support materials for teachers (Martin, 2008; Hood

and Tobutt, 2015). Also at this time, the Nuffield Foundation (2000) published a report strongly criticising the persistent lack of government strategic direction in relation to foreign languages development and blaming this on what it judged as the nation's 'deplorable monolingualism' (p3-4). The Nuffield Foundation was not a lone voice in the wilderness however. Concerted calls were also being made by numerous organisations and special interest groups to reinstate and expand languages provision in the primary school sector (Dearing, 1994; SCAA, 1997; DfEE, 1998; Ofsted, 1998). This all had a galvanising effect on the government and its policymakers and, once more, primary languages took centre stage in educational debate (Jones and McLachlan, 2009).

This growing resurgence in early FL learning during the 1990s and early 2000s was also a reflection of a larger, international phenomenon (Johnstone, 1994). The development of a single European market was resulting in the need for closer political and commercial cooperation (Sharpe, 2001), and England was also experiencing a growing multilingual and multicultural population (Kirsch, 2008). Consequently, there was a recognition of an increasing need by policymakers to ensure that young people were equipped with the necessary skills and attitudes to enable them to thrive in such a cross cultural context (Edelenbos and Johnstone, 1996).

Momentum for PFL learning was gathering and in 2002 a notable shift in government policy was marked by the publication of the National Languages Strategy – Languages for All: Languages for Life (DfES, 2002). This document set out the government's commitment to improving language proficiency in England by providing an 'entitlement' to language learning for all pupils at Key Stage 2 by 2010 (Driscoll, 2014). It is note-worthy that, whilst the political tide towards early FL learning was turning, the government's pledge at this time stopped short of providing foreign languages with a formal statutory position within the primary curriculum. Nonetheless, following the publication of this strategy, substantial funding and extensive national, regional and local training to support the development of primary teachers' foreign language proficiency and methodology began to emerge (King, 2011). This support extended to planning guidance with the publication of the Key Stage 2 Framework for Languages (DfES, 2005). This document outlined key skills-based objectives, providing a framework for the progression of foreign language learning over the four years at KS2 in a bid to support teachers

and encourage a more coherent, consistent approach to provision in schools (Woodgate-Jones, 2009; Driscoll, 2014).

Developments to strengthen PFL teaching also extended beyond primary schools themselves. Funding, for example, was provided to Specialist Languages Colleges who agreed to support their primary school colleagues (Driscoll, 2014). ITT providers began to recognise their role in strengthening the growth of a teaching workforce with the subject expertise and pedagogic knowledge necessary to successfully put the government's foreign languages strategy into action. Consequently many ITT providers began to develop specialist routes in foreign languages within their programmes with funded primary postgraduate courses attracting larger numbers of language graduates (Driscoll, 2014). Such was the perceived need for primary teachers with foreign language expertise that the number of ITT providers with a specialism in languages quickly escalated from 5 in 2001/02 to 38 in 2006/07 (Ofsted, 2008). Training in some institutions even included a reciprocal four-week teaching placement in Europe funded by the Training and Development Agency for Schools (Martin, 2008).

High levels of funding and training, in addition to the concerted recruitment drives for suitably qualified teachers, resulted in a rapid increase in FL provision in the primary sector with 70% of schools reported to be teaching languages in KS2, albeit at different stages of introduction, by 2009 (Wade *et al.*, 2009). An evaluation of the quality of this provision by Ofsted (2011), whilst being largely positive, exposed some mixed findings. Pupil achievement overall was judged to be at least satisfactory with many schools being rated as very good or excellent. Pupils demonstrated positive attitudes to their FL language learning and their listening skills were judged as very good. There were, however, weaknesses in pupils' reading, writing and grammatical awareness and it was found that teachers were not always planning effectively for continuity and progression in pupil learning (Ofsted, 2011).

Despite a recognition of the on-going challenges for schools in relation to recruiting and retaining appropriately skilled teachers (Wade *et al.*, 2009) and addressing the variability of approach and quality of foreign languages delivery (Hunt *et al.*, 2005; Ofsted, 2011), a formal review of the government's FL strategy assessed that the ground-work for successful provision in the primary sector was already largely established (DfES, 2007). Thus, it proposed that

'languages become part of the statutory curriculum for KS2 when it is next reviewed' (Dearing and King, 2007:9). This report was followed by the Independent Review of the Primary Curriculum (Rose *et al.*, 2009) and the Cambridge Primary Review (Alexander, 2010). Both supported the restructuring of the Primary Curriculum in England and Wales into broad subject domains, or areas, of learning and both situated FLs as an integral subject within this curriculum design, thereby diminishing its existing status as an optional curricular extra (Hood and Tobutt, 2015).

These proposals, however, failed to materialise as 2010 brought about a change of government and with that a period of uncertainty during which policy for the teaching of foreign languages was unclear. The subsequent withdrawal of funding and training opportunities resulted in schools feeling little incentive to either extend or even continue their existing FL provision (Pattison, 2014). Consequently, four years later, as the long-awaited KS2 statutory FL curriculum was finally published (DfE, 2013), there remained insufficient teachers equipped with the necessary skills, knowledge and attitudes to teach it and thus provision in many schools was deemed fragile (King, 2011; Driscoll, 2014).

In chronicling the development of PFLs in England, it has become clear that those tasked with evaluating its success have drawn mixed conclusions (Burstall *et al.*, 1974; Wade *et al.*, 2009; Ofsted, 2011). This has, perhaps, not been helped by the lack of universally agreed purpose, content and methodology used to justify its position within the primary curriculum and consequently the aims against which early FL learning is seen to be measured (Satchwell, 2006; Driscoll, 2015). Certainly the prime justification advanced for FL learning over the last three or four decades has been its perceived usefulness, and it would appear that such rationales continue to dominate FL discourse and debate (Byram, 2002; Lawes, 2007). Recent UK initiatives and government-led edicts focused on foreign language education point to an emphasis primarily on developing learners' linguistic attainment as a means of strengthening England's position in economic and employment terms (Graham and Santos, 2015). For example, the Nuffield Languages Inquiry (Nuffield Foundation, 2000) maintained that unless the UK improved its ability to engage in foreign language learning, its global competitive standing would weaken. More recently, and despite a change in government, this central utilitarian message remains, with the Purpose of Study for Languages as set out in the new National Curriculum in England (DfE, 2013) asserting that 'language teaching should provide

the foundation for learning further languages, equipping pupils to study and work in other countries' (p193).

This preoccupation with instrumental justifications for foreign language learning prevalent among policymakers is, however, questioned by some. Williams (2001) states unequivocally that he believes there are serious limitations to the idea that languages can contribute significantly to employment and the economic performance of our nation. Given that the status of English as a global language seems beyond doubt, Hawkins (2005) also questions the notion that the eventual FL needs of children in England can be predicted. In fact, even the Association for Language Learning (ALL) recognised in their submission to the Nuffield Inquiry back in 1998 that 'it is feasible that many individual UK citizens will get by with English alone throughout their lives' (p.5).

2.2 A diversity of approaches for primary foreign languages practice

The multiple and often conflicting views regarding the perceived purpose of early foreign language learning (Tierney and Gallestegi, 2005) inevitably creates considerable challenges for schools as 'they are not operating within a single framework of practice' (Jones and McLachlan, 2009:13) nor, it would seem, working towards a common programme. As such, teachers are often unaware how to plan for high quality teaching which impacts positively on children's learning (McLachlan, 2009). This would seem particularly significant as no detailed guidance has, as yet, been centrally provided to replace the Key Stage 2 Framework for Languages (DfES, 2005) as a means of supporting teachers in translating the National Curriculum (DfE, 2013) into classroom practice. Inevitably, therefore, studies evaluating PFL provision in England continue to reveal considerable variations in teaching approaches and the priority schools give to it (Cable *et al.*, 2010; Tinsley and Board, 2017).

2.2.1 Language proficiency versus learner engagement: a necessarily polarised debate?

Although there are many who offer a broader rationale for early FL learning (Sharpe and Driscoll, 2000; Hawkins, 2005), the emphasis on children's foreign language proficiency has been evident since the publication of the Burstall (1974) report. This report was critical of PFL

initiatives almost exclusively on the basis of what was considered to be a lack of evidence of the impact of starting young on eventual attainment. Language proficiency has continued to be a driving force of policy and is notably evident in the National Languages Strategy (DfES, 2002), which sought to ensure that all pupils by age 11 had attained 'a recognised level of competence on the Common European Framework' (p15) and, more recently, in the Programme of Study for Languages in the new National Curriculum which makes explicit its expectation that teaching should 'focus on enabling pupils to make substantial progress in one language' (DfE, 2013:194).

Hunt (2009) defines progression in foreign language learning as a 'broadening of contexts and content; a development of the four skills' (p206): namely speaking, listening, reading and writing. She contends that children require opportunities to build on and extend their linguistic skills and knowledge through a carefully structured curriculum in which they learn how to manipulate language and apply their knowledge of language structure to new contexts. In this way young learners are supported in being able to produce more complex language with increasing levels of independence (Jones and Coffey, 2013). This, Hood and Tobutt (2015) argue, would prepare children more appropriately for future FL learning at secondary school, ensuring that they begin this phase of their education as confident 'users' of a foreign language rather than merely 'word-level learners tied to a diet of survival topics' (p197). This could be considered as vital for children's longer-term success as language proficiency quickly becomes a priority within secondary education due to the importance placed on examinations (Driscoll and Frost, 1999).

The degree to which this focus on proficiency and attainment is translated into practice in most primary schools is, however, another matter. Although a study undertaken by Powell *et al.* (2000) identified that the majority of their teacher and headteacher participants believed the central aim of PFL to be developing competence in a language, their findings do not appear to be supported by other studies evaluating FL provision in the primary sector. In fact, other research points clearly to teachers perceiving pupil enjoyment as being of more importance than the development of proficiency in the target language (Driscoll, 1999; Watzke, 2007; Cable *et al.*, 2010;) and this belief is overwhelmingly reflected in teaching approaches and curriculum design witnessed in schools. Lessons observed in many studies bear witness to the

predominantly games-based approach to lessons which involves limited language content and focus almost exclusively on speaking and listening (Driscoll, 2000).

Martin (2012), for example, found in her research into PFL provision in 19 Pathfinder local authorities between 2003-2005 that the curriculum in most participating schools was largely focused on pupil enjoyment, with little substantial difference apparent in the cognitive challenge offered to older pupils compared with the younger learners. The considerable imbalance between the development of oracy and literacy skills was also highlighted in her research alongside the limited evidence of explicit grammar teaching in many of the schools. These findings were echoed in longitudinal research undertaken a few years later by Cable *et al.* (2010) which also recognised the interactive, oracy based approach to FL teaching and the resulting lack of focus on learner progression. Teachers in these studies appear to justify such pedagogic approaches on the grounds that they view foreign languages as a welcome antidote to what they consider to be the higher stakes learning expected in much of the rest of the curriculum (Jones and Coffey, 2013).

The focus on the importance of developing positive attitudes is not restricted to the views of teachers alone however. It should be recognised that although policymakers often appear to view the value of FL learning solely through a more instrumental lens (DfE, 2013; Graham and Santos, 2015), the importance of providing an engaging languages curriculum has not been entirely overlooked. The present government, and that which preceded it, have recognised this and have advocated learner engagement, to a greater or lesser extent, in policy documentation. The entitlement of children to 'high quality teaching and learning that instils enthusiasm in learning languages' (DfES, 2002:9), for example, was set out in the Languages Strategy for England (DfES, 2002) under the then Labour government. In this strategy document attempts to reverse the increasingly high drop-out rates in foreign language learning at secondary school seem to rest squarely on the success of the implementation of FLs in the primary sector (Macrory and McLachlan, 2009). It is perhaps, therefore, not surprising that ensuring young pupils enjoy and are motivated by their language learning is deemed to be of critical importance. The potential of PFLs to enhance children's enthusiasm in this area of their learning is also well documented with research in the field of second language acquisition consistently linking high levels of learner motivation with language learning outcomes and success (Trim, 1997; Kubanek-German, 1998; Blondin *et al.*, 1998;

Naysmith, 1999; Dörnyei and Csizer, 2002; Graham, 2014; Mitchell, 2014) as well as improved chances of pupils continuing with their FL learning for longer (Nisbet and Welsh, 1972).

Whilst it would appear that the strong relationship between positive attitudes to foreign language learning and learner success is uncontested, Mitchell (2014:210) posits that it is 'the *direction of influence*' [my emphasis] which is more heavily debated. Satchwell (2006), for instance, believes that it is through the experience of success that learner engagement is secured and not, in fact, the other way around. Graham (2014) supports this view and, drawing on the work of Bandura (1995), goes on to make a useful distinction between what she terms the 'easy success' borne out of the oracy-focused, games-based lessons which often characterises PFLs provision. These lessons, she contends, do not, in the end, lead to a motivating learning experience. Instead, she goes on to argue, it is the success which is more associated with developing problem-solving skills and perseverance which will ultimately lead to children experiencing a degree of mastery in their FL learning (Graham, 2014:177).

Longitudinal research undertaken to evaluate PFLs provision would appear to validate this notion of achievement as a prerequisite of motivation (Wade *et al.*, 2009; Cable *et al.*, 2010). These studies reveal that primary teachers are often preoccupied with safeguarding pupils' enjoyment in their FL lessons, frequently citing writing and the teaching of grammar as particular barriers to this (Driscoll, 2014). In fact, however, research has pointed to learners actually associating activities which lack challenge as contributing to any lack of engagement, particularly as time goes on (Enever and Watts, 2009). Although it was evident in these studies that children enjoyed the wide variety of engaging activities in their lessons, what is coined as 'fun-fatigue' by Hood and Tobutt (2015:33) began to develop for many. The excessive repetition of word-level language and memorisation of formulaic phrases coupled with a diet of isolated, 'fun' activities which lacked cognitive challenge, and which were disconnected with any meaningful outcomes, were beginning to affect children's levels of motivation and sense of success. As a result, initial motivation for FL learning was eventually seen to give way to feelings of frustration for some children (Jones and McLachlan, 2009; Wade *et al.*, 2009; Cable *et al.*, 2010; Martin, 2012). Indeed, Hood and Tobutt (2015) argue that children often perceive challenge in their lessons as more satisfying as they are able to equate this to learning which, in turn, supports the development of their own self-concept as successful foreign language learners (Johnstone, 2003:20).

Tinsley and Board (2017) express concerns about the consequences of the disparity of FL provision which persists in the primary sector on pupil learning and outcomes. In this, they do not stand alone. Those who advocate the importance of progression in language proficiency contend that the capacity of children to become 'competent and creative language users' (Jones and Coffey, 2013:5) means that PFLs warrant an alternative pedagogic approach. In fact, the notion that proficiency and enjoyment are in direct opposition with one another is questioned by Tierney and Gallastegi (2005). They suggest that there is a need to change the prevalent discourse which currently focuses on 'fun' as a means of defining PFL practices to one which is more weighted to the setting of high expectations and appropriate challenge for young children. This, they argue, is the means through which engagement can be engendered and sustained.

This lack of emphasis placed on pupil progress in the foreign language can be considered not only as a barrier to classroom level learning but is also viewed as having a bearing more broadly on the status of PFLs as a curriculum subject. McLachlan (2009) argues that the fact that current commonly adopted FL pedagogic practices are judged as failing to impact on pupil learning and attainment means that securing the longer-term commitment of school leaders, teachers, and pupils to PFLs is unlikely. This view is supported by Jones and Coffey (2013) who warn that the consequence of perceiving FL lessons as merely a fun accessory to the rest of the curriculum is that they can easily become side-lined altogether in favour of subjects which are considered to impact more substantially on children's educational development. These warnings would appear to be borne out in a number of research reports in recent years where teachers, faced with an overcrowded curriculum and having to meet the many demands on their time, were seen to reduce or abandon their foreign languages lessons altogether (Powell *et al.*, 2000; Driscoll, 2014).

Historically, it would perhaps not have been unreasonable to draw the conclusion that the lack of status attached to FLs was more closely associated with its less formalised position within the primary curriculum. However, the findings of the recently published Language Trends Survey (Tinsley and Board, 2017), which annually charts the languages provision across both the primary and secondary sectors, and which now provides a picture of PFLs within this new

statutory era, parallels earlier studies. Although this study points to languages being more commonplace, with nearly all schools responding to the survey reporting that they teach a foreign language, teachers equally indicated that this aspect of their school's curriculum was deemed to have a low profile. Respondents admitted that lessons were regularly being 'dropped or shortened in favour of other priorities' (p4), namely those which were judged to contribute to their school's results. Perhaps the outcomes of this annual study are all the more worrying on two further counts. Firstly, the authors recognise the low response rate to their survey with a mere 727 out of 3,000 primary schools who were invited to respond actually doing so. This may, they suggest, indicate a weakening commitment for foreign languages, in spite of its recent increased formal curriculum status. Secondly, it is acknowledged that schools who do offer some element of FL provision for their pupils are more likely to have responded to the survey than those who do not. The national picture may, therefore, in reality be less positive still.

In conclusion, although it would be difficult to argue that developing positive attitudes towards language learning should not be a central goal of PFLs, it would appear that developing a coherent curriculum which ensures progression and success in learning is equally demanded (Jones and Coffey, 2013:34). Only in so doing will foreign languages stand a chance of being seriously considered as an important and worthwhile addition to the primary curriculum and provide 'a real opportunity for primary teachers to make language learning different and, most importantly, sustainably successful' (Hood and Tobutt, 2015:197).

2.2.2 The place of literacy in early foreign language learning

As has already been argued, a preoccupation for making PFL learning "fun" for children (Martin, 2010; Jones and Coffey, 2013; Driscoll, 2014), coupled with what Hawkins (1996) describes as a large underestimation by many teachers of the capacity of young children to learn a new language, has led to a view that developing literacy skills in a FL is inappropriate for primary-aged learners. There exists, however, research (Wolff, 2000; Kirsch, 2008; Hunt, 2009; Macaro, 2014; Manchón, 2014) which provides a distinctly opposing view and which judges that competence in a FL requires a focus on the development of all four skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing).

Literacy is argued to play a vital role in supporting foreign language learning in a number of important ways (Wolff, 2000; Manchón, 2014). Firstly, Manchón (2014) considers that, in the context of the FL classroom, the act of writing does not constrain children's thinking time in the same way as the immediacy of response necessitated by speech production. Leki (2001) supports this view, recognising the patience of pen and paper and its ability to cater for the differing levels of learner competence and understanding (p206). Writing therefore offers young learners a slower pace in which they are able to draw on their prior knowledge in order to demonstrate their understanding and communicate their thinking. Secondly, Manchón posits that the visibility of written text offers a further element of support for learners and this is argued by Jones and Coffey (2013) to be essential. This is not least because it is seen as a means of enabling children, who are just beginning their foreign language learning journey, to distinguish between one unfamiliar word and another, but also as a means of making transparent aspects of the structure of language which would otherwise be hidden. The capacity of literacy to reinforce oracy skills such as children's phonological awareness, was also recognised in the KS2 Framework for Languages (DfES, 2005).

Finally, Manchón (2014) considers the cognitive benefits afforded by 'the challenging, problem-solving nature' of writing (p99). She argues that when engaging in composition children are creatively searching for solutions which require them to draw on and extend their linguistic knowledge as well as their general language learning skills (such as the use of a dictionary to broaden their vocabulary). This production of language, Swain (1995) argues, leads to the acquisition and deeper understanding of sentence structure and grammatical rules. Of particular significance perhaps, in light of studies which have revealed teachers' desire to promote positive learner attitudes, is Kirsch's (2008) perspective on the importance of such opportunities for children. She points to studies which have identified the capacity of young children to engage in analytical thinking and therefore draws the conclusion that they are more likely to be engaged by foreign language tasks that require a degree of cognitive challenge than those designed merely for fun.

When considering the place of literacy, and writing in particular, in foreign language learning, it is important to recognise the two distinct but arguably complementary forms of writing. The first is known as 'structured writing' (Kirsch, 2008) or 'learning-to-write' (Manchón, 2014). The aim of this type of writing is to support children's understanding of the mechanics of the

language. The emphasis is therefore on form and structure (Kirsch, 2008) and necessarily involves the explicit teaching of grammar with the focus not on *using* the language but rather on 'teachers and learners...talking *about* the language' (Macaro, 2014:114). Consequently writing in this instance is seen as a goal in its own right (Manchón, 2014). Macaro (2014) recognises, however, that although few, if any, would dispute that acquiring an understanding of grammar has a place in the language learning process, there are those who question whether it should be explicitly taught. Certainly Ytreberg (1997), for example, remained unconvinced of the need for an overt focus on grammatical rules and patterns for young learners. Jones and Coffey (2013) also acknowledge the less than positive associations many learners have formed in relation to the grammatical element of their experience of foreign language learning. They blame this, however, not on grammar itself per se, but rather on what they, and Hood and Tobutt (2015), view as a pedagogic approach which abstracts knowledge about the structure and form of language from an opportunity to apply this for a meaningful and immediate purpose.

This focus on form, therefore, needs to be balanced with the ability of pupils to apply this as procedural knowledge in a way that enables them to communicate their own thoughts and ideas (Wesche and Skehan, 2002; Macaro, 2014; Hood and Tobutt, 2015). This second form of writing is known as 'communicative writing' (Kirsch, 2008) or 'writing-to-learn' (Manchón, 2014). The importance of planning a curriculum which skilfully combines both forms of writing is highlighted by Mitchell (2014) who suggests that young children learn most effectively when they are in receipt of rich teacher modelling, have regular opportunities to practice and reinforce new skills and knowledge, and have the occasion to apply this knowledge in meaningful contexts. This principle is advocated in Jones and Coffey's (2013) '3Ps' sequence (which consists of Presentation, Practice and Production) and Hood and Tobutt's (2015) '3Ms' approach (Meeting Language, Manipulating Language and Making Language my Own) which both seek to place less emphasis on teacher control and more on learner autonomy.

By way of conclusion, it could certainly be argued that teachers need to seriously consider the place of literacy in PFLs as a means of redressing the disproportionate time spent in many primary schools on developing children's oracy skills which, it is judged, hinders pupils' capacity to make progress in learning a new language (Jones and Coffey, 2013; Driscoll, 2014; Tinsley and Board, 2017). Perhaps, however, it is the nature of the children's foreign language

learning experiences which is significant. Many would contend that whilst early FL learning requires careful scaffolding by the teacher, pedagogic approaches need to be underpinned by the principle that it is cognitive challenge and meaningful pupil output, rather than formulaic repetition and tightly controlled memorisation, that are key to linguistic progression (Wesche and Skehan, 2002; Macaro, 2014; Manchón, 2014; Hood and Tobutt, 2015).

2.2.3 Supporting communication and learner autonomy

There are clearly those who advocate the importance of enabling children to manipulate the foreign language, in both speech and in writing, in order to communicate their own thoughts and ideas with increasing levels of independence (Hunt, 2009; Jones and Coffey, 2013; Hood and Tobutt, 2015). Macaro (2014:118), however, points to the ‘myth’ he believes exists that foreign language lessons in England are environments which emphasise the development of such communication skills. He stresses the view, explored earlier in this section, that teachers instead spent too long teaching the vocabulary and preordained set phrases which are deemed to be more pre-communicative in nature (Hood and Tobutt, 2015) and which are insufficient for preparing pupils for real language use (Littlewood, 1981). The absence of opportunities for those learning foreign languages to encounter the language and use it in practical and purposeful ways has already been highlighted as being a substantial contributor to the difficulty of sustaining pupil motivation (Williams, 2001; Kirsch, 2012). There is, therefore, widespread support for a strengthened focus on communicative language teaching which is characterised instead by exposing children to rich language and which supports them in using the foreign language creatively in meaningful contexts and for real and relevant purposes (Brown, 2001; Watzke, 2007; Driscoll, 2015; Hood and Tobutt, 2015).

Integral to the communicative language teaching approach is the ability of children to take increased ownership over their language use, applying their knowledge of language and language learning strategies flexibly in a range of contexts and with increasing independence. As Grenfell and Harris (2014) assert: ‘it is difficult to conceive of a successful language user who is not also an autonomous language user, choosing what to say and how to say it’ (p188). Defining the notion of learner autonomy is problematic, however, as Little (2003) argues that it is often conflated with self-instruction and is further complicated by a lack of agreement about whether it is primarily a personal attribute which is possessed by the learner or whether it is

more concerned with the methodology adopted and the environment created by the teacher (Grenfell and Harris, 2014). In the context of PFLs it may be more appropriate to consider autonomy in terms of the knowledge and skills which are suitable and achievable for young language learners. In this regard, Hawkins' (2005) view of the aim of early foreign language learning as being to support children to 'do things with words' as a means of communicating "'meanings that matter" for them' (p7) is perhaps helpful.

In this context the teacher assumes a central role in ensuring that learners have a clear understanding of the purpose of their learning (Little, 2003; Lamb, 2008) and are provided with the tools necessary for communication. Additionally, lessons need to be carefully structured and scaffolded, and intervention gradually withdrawn, in order that learners are able to apply their learning to communicate their thoughts and ideas in ways which are less constrained by the teacher (Hurrell, 1999; Rubin *et al.*, 2007; Kirsch, 2012). Of equal importance is also the ability of the teacher to create a safe learning environment in which pupils are actively encouraged to take risks (Watzke, 2007; Kirsch, 2008) and where 'making mistakes becomes part of the learning experience' (Macaro; 2014:113).

Although there would appear to be compelling arguments advanced for a change in pedagogical approach to PFLs, and certainly the new statutory FL curriculum for KS2 sets the bar higher with provision expected to include a balance of speaking and writing as well as explicit teaching of grammatical structures (DfE, 2013), one cannot ignore the implications this poses for schools and, in particular, the non-specialist general classroom practitioner.

2.2.4 Implications of teacher subject knowledge in PFLs on classroom practice

A report issued by Ofsted in 2009, which examined primary teachers' levels of subject knowledge across the curriculum, highlighted the importance of teachers possessing sound levels of subject knowledge in the subjects they were teaching. The report did also, however, acknowledge the lack of opportunity available for them to develop their subject knowledge beyond the core subjects as a result of the increased emphasis on English and Maths in schools, and the inevitable demands this placed on teachers. The debate about the importance of subject knowledge was reignited more recently as a result of the Carter Review of initial

teacher training (2015). A proposed framework for Core ITT was subsequently published in response to this review. This framework set out its recommendation for a strengthened focus on ensuring trainees have sufficient subject knowledge, endorsing opportunities for them to be able to pursue a subject specialism.

The importance of teacher subject knowledge is also reflected in studies which sought to specifically evaluate PFLs provision in England (Wade *et al.*, 2009; Cable *et al.*, 2010; Martin, 2012; Tinsley and Board, 2017). Although these studies suggest that teachers, on the whole, appear willing to attempt some foreign language teaching, McLachlan (2009:196) argues that it is not sufficient to rely on teachers' 'goodwill' alone as a means of establishing a coherent FLs curriculum for young children. Instead, teacher competence in the foreign language is deemed to be one of the main prerequisites for high quality teaching and learning of PFLs (Wragg *et al.*, 1989; Poulson, 2001; McLachlan, 2009). Underpinning this view is the assumption that 'limited linguists can only teach to their own limits' (McLachlan, 2009:196) and therefore the more a teacher knows, the more effective their teaching will be. Secure teacher subject knowledge, she asserts, is a non-negotiable in other curriculum subjects and thus, she goes on to argue, the expectations for PFLs should be no different if teachers are to have an impact on pupil achievement.

Despite the perceived importance of teacher subject knowledge, a number of studies have highlighted the insufficient language skills of teachers as one of the greatest barriers to the successful implementation of FLs in the primary sector (Johnstone, 2003; Barton *et al.*, 2009; Enever and Watts, 2009; Wade and Marshall, 2009; Woolhouse *et al.*, 2013; Legg, 2013; Woodgate-Jones, 2015). This is particularly significant as the programme of study for PFLs as set out in the National Curriculum (DfE, 2013) has placed higher expectations on reading and writing in the FL which inevitably demands the explanation and application of a grammar system for which many teachers have only limited understanding (Crichton and Templeton, 2010). This concern about limited subject knowledge is not restricted to the generalist primary teacher alone, but is even echoed by primary teachers with a foreign language specialism in a study undertaken by Barnes (2006). This lack of teacher confidence in relation to their own language proficiency may offer an additional explanation as to why PFLs are often characterised by lessons which offer limited language content or linguistic challenge (Driscoll,

2014) and which are judged to create a major barrier to enabling children to be successful and independent users of the FL (Johnstone, 2014).

Teachers' formal subject knowledge and foreign language proficiency are judged to impact not only on the quality of the FL lessons they teach but also on the extent to which they wish to teach the subject in the first place. Studies conducted by Woolhouse *et al.* (2010), Legg (2013) and Woodgate-Jones (2015), for example, found a clear association between limited knowledge of the foreign language and diminished teacher confidence. This lack of confidence translated for some teachers into, at best a lack of motivation for teaching the FL and, at worst into complete avoidance of and open hostility towards this aspect of the curriculum (Crichton and Templeton, 2010). Perhaps unsurprisingly the reverse is also judged to be true in that teachers with higher levels of subject knowledge are perceived as more confident. Barnes (2005), for example, found in her study that those teachers who regularly taught PFLs did so primarily as they were secure in their own language proficiency and were therefore motivated by a desire to share this with their pupils.

The issue of teacher subject knowledge has been made all the more challenging as the number of students embarking on teacher training programmes who possess even a basic level of knowledge in a foreign language has diminished significantly. McLachlan (2009) places the blame for this squarely on the decision to allow secondary-aged pupils in England the option to abandon their FL learning altogether in KS4. This dearth of linguistic expertise in beginning teachers is perhaps also not helped by the fact that English and Mathematics are currently the only subjects for which a minimum level of subject knowledge is required for teachers entering the profession. McLachlan (2009:198) therefore questions how these future teachers can be expected to play a part in the 'renaissance' of language learning in any consequential way.

Despite the literature and studies which appear to link high quality teaching and learning in PFLs with secure teacher language proficiency, the influential study undertaken by Burstall *et al.* (1974) called into question the importance of teacher subject knowledge. Their research identified a stronger correlation between a teacher's general proficiency in the classroom and their ability to provide effective FL learning opportunities for their pupils. The level of proficiency of the teacher in the foreign language was judged to be less important. Although

Cable *et al.* (2010) do not disregard the importance of teacher subject to the same extent as Burstall *et al.* (2010), their findings do reveal a direct correlation between the fusion of teachers' subject and pedagogic knowledge and pupil attainment, asserting that pupil attainment was highest where 'teachers were experienced and where teachers' linguistic skills were strong' (p148). This suggests that it is not only a teacher's grasp of subject knowledge that is important but also their ability to transform this into content which can be understood by their learners. Research undertaken by Woolhouse *et al.* (2010) also revealed how teachers who participated in a CPD programme designed to connect their existing pedagogic knowledge and skills with the linguistic knowledge required to teach a FL to young learners expressed an improved security and confidence. This research would appear to support Poulson's (2001) belief that teachers require support to develop a subject knowledge which is both functional and 'pedagogically situated' (p46).

Despite the nuances associated with the discourse on teacher subject knowledge, Woodgate-Jones (2015) asserts that the need for teachers to have at least some understanding of, and confidence in, the subjects they are teaching is irrefutable. It has been argued thus far that FL provision in the primary sector is, at best, variable (Jones and McLachlan, 2009) and that aspirations for high quality teaching which impacts positively on children's learning is often at odds with the teaching approaches adopted and the priority PFLs are afforded (Cable *et al.*, 2010; Tinsley and Board, 2017). In this regard, subject knowledge certainly remains a considerable challenge. The ability of a teacher to actively shape their own actions in the classroom has been, however, widely acknowledged as being influenced by the complex interplay of a number of other fundamental factors (Trumbull, 1987; Goodson and Walker, 1991; Pinar *et al.*, 2008).

2.3 The influence of beliefs and social context on the practice of PFL teachers

The subject knowledge and educational beliefs held by teachers, and the context in which they find themselves working, are argued to influence teachers in making decisions about the learning opportunities they provide for their pupils (Clandinin, 1985; Gudmundsdottir, 1990; Pajares, 1992; Cabaroglu and Roberts, 2000; Pinar *et al.*, 2008). There is, however, a lack of agreement in relation to the extent of that influence. Set against the backdrop of the new

statutory era for PFLs, where teachers are now having to grapple with the challenge of translating the national curriculum (DfE, 2013) into practice in their classrooms, an exploration of these issues becomes of central importance. This section, therefore, begins by attempting to define the notion of teacher beliefs as a construct. Studies and research which have explored the influence of teacher beliefs and social context are then examined in relation to the way in which they might be viewed as supporting or inhibiting teachers' FL practices.

In the field of language teacher education, beliefs are espoused as being central to teacher learning, and an understanding of the influences on the development of beliefs is judged as being of crucial importance for those seeking to support trainee teachers in improving their practice (Pajares, 1992). Consequently, teacher beliefs have increasingly become the focus of research studies in recent years (Borg, 2011). Defining the notion of beliefs is, however, less than straightforward. There are scholars who seek to make a clear distinction between teacher subject knowledge and pedagogic belief. Nisbett and Ross (1980), Ernest (1989) and Pajares (1992), for example, identify knowledge as the more cognitive component of teacher thinking, which is more receptive to reason and critical examination. Teacher beliefs, on the other hand, are argued to be the more affective, deeply-seated personal truths which are often drawn from memory and experience (Nespor, 1987; Ernest, 1989; Borg, 2011).

In his review of research in the field of foreign and second language teaching, Borg (2003:83) identifies that a 'multiplicity of labels' have been used to explore the notion of teacher beliefs. He argues that, rather than helping to create clarity, this diversity of terminology has resulted in significant and unnecessary 'conceptual ambiguity'. As a means of addressing this ambiguity, Borg (2003) adopts the term 'teacher cognition' to encompass both the knowledge and beliefs held by teachers. Borg is not alone, however, in his view that research should reflect the important relationship which exists between these two constructs, rather than trying to create potentially false divisions between them. Nearly a decade before, in his study on teacher cognition in language teaching, Woods (1996) proposed the notion of BAK as a conceptual framework for understanding the interplay between teacher *beliefs*, *attitudes* and *knowledge*.

For the purposes of this research, the term 'beliefs' is used to reflect the way in which the beginning teacher participants interpret, mediate and make sense of information about, and experiences of, learning and teaching PFLs and how this is translated into their behaviour in the classroom (Cabaroğlu and Roberts, 2000:388). Essentially, this study is based on the premise that this journey is both developmental and unique to each individual (Borg, 2003). O'Hanlon (2012) maintains that the primary basis for bringing about improved practice is rooted in personal beliefs. Gudmundsdóttir (1990) supports this view, arguing that it is these beliefs which support teachers in making decisions about the pedagogic approaches they employ in the classroom and shape the kind of curriculum they offer their pupils. Other researchers in the field of education (Grossman *et al.*, 1989; Putnam and Borko, 2000; Tsai, 2002) support this view, contending that there is evidence of significant coherence between teacher beliefs and the enactment of their classroom practice. In the field of language teacher education specifically, however, findings are less than conclusive. Basturkmen (2012), for example, conducted a review of existing research exploring the relationship between language teachers' beliefs and practices. Although some of these studies indicated congruence between teacher participants' beliefs and behaviours in the classroom (Cundale, 2001; Farrell and Kun, 2008), research findings of this nature were not consistent and correlations were mostly limited in nature.

Whilst there are clearly those who espouse the view that teachers' beliefs are so intertwined with their actions and behaviours that they inevitably affect their teaching (Gudmundsdóttir, 1990; Cundale, 2001; Farrell and Kun, 2008; O'Hanlon, 2012), there are, conversely, those who express concerns about linking the teacher so irrevocably to his or her practice. Borg (2003:91), for example, makes a clear distinction between what he terms 'cognitive change' occurring over the course of, or resulting from, teacher education programmes and 'behavioural change' exhibited as teachers' foreign language practices in the classroom. He suggests that one is not necessarily a predicator of the other, in that 'behavioural change does not imply cognitive change, and the latter...does not guarantee changes in behaviour either'.

This stance is supported by the findings of a small-scale case study undertaken by Freeman (1993) who investigated the changes in the understandings and practices of four in-service foreign language teachers undertaking their masters degree. This study revealed that the programme did appear to impact clearly on the teachers' conceptualisation and beliefs about

language teaching. Significantly, however, it also revealed a great deal of variability with regards to the effect of these belief changes on their practice in the classroom. Other studies in the field of language teacher education have also revealed clear discrepancies between teachers' beliefs and practices (Fung and Chow, 2002; Ng and Farrell, 2003).

The need for further longitudinal studies which explore the complex relationship between the two facets of language teacher development is, therefore, argued to be important. In addition, Phipps and Borg (2009) assert that any such analysis must include the part that contextual factors have to play in this relationship. The call for more research of this nature is driven by the view that language teachers' behaviours in the classroom may be shaped by their beliefs but that they are also informed and determined by the environmental factors inherent in the school contexts in which they are working (e.g. school policies, leadership directives, curriculum and assessment practices etc) (Borg, 1998). Indeed, Phipps and Borg (2009) and Basturkmen (2012) point to a number of studies of foreign language teachers, such as those conducted by Fang (1996), Johnson (1996), Borg (2003) and Lee (2008), which provide abundant evidence of the way in which contextual factors and situational constraints act to 'mediate the extent to which teachers can act in accordance with their beliefs' (Phipps and Borg, 2009:381). Johnson's (1996) research, for example, highlights the tensions faced by trainee teachers on their school placements when seeking to adopt pedagogic approaches which were aligned with their own principles. There are examples in this study of trainees who felt that their actions in the classroom were driven more by influences beyond their control than by choices stemming from their beliefs about good language teaching.

The findings from Johnson's (1996) study would seem to suggest that the capacity of a teacher to actively shape their own actions is significant. It is here where the notion of teacher agency appears to become important to this study. The literature, however, is far from homogeneous in relation to the conceptualisation of teacher agency, resulting in varied terms being used and often divergent understandings being offered (Priestley *et al.*, 2015). For some scholars, agency is understood in relation to terms such as choice and responsibility (Lightfoot, 1986), whereby individuals are perceived as active entities who possess the capacity to act with intent and autonomy in order to 'transform and refine their worlds and thereby take control of their lives' (Oolbekink-Marchand *et al.*, 2017:38). In the context of FL teaching, then, this

autonomy can be considered in relation to both the individual's classroom practice and the individual's influence on wider school policies and practices (Bolin, 1989).

There are others, however, such as Eteläpeltö *et al.* (2013), who argue that taking the view that responsibility for agentic practices rests strongly on an individual's capacity does not sufficiently acknowledge or address the way in which social contexts can either support or limit individual action. Instead, Higgins and Leat (2001) offer the notion of 'situational agency'. In other words, although the individual teacher may possess the intent and capacity to act in accordance with their own personal beliefs, they are only able to act 'by means of their environment rather than simply *in* their environment' [my emphasis] (Biesta and Tedder, 2007:137). Thus, individuals are not considered to be in complete control of their actions but are, instead, affected and heavily influenced by the particular professional environments and contexts in which they find themselves. This is an important distinction from the more individualised perspective offered in that agency is not simply seen as a personal attribute that people can possess and apply directly to their working practices but rather is something that people do in response to their environments (Priestley *et al.*, 2015). Research which reveals the way in which the school environment and culture is able to steer the formation of the pedagogical beliefs and practices of foreign language teachers has already been highlighted earlier in this section (Fang, 1996; Johnson, 1996; Borg, 2003 and Lee, 2008).

Considering empowerment in such terms enables us to consider how PFL teachers can be both enabled and restricted by their social contexts (Priestley *et al.*, 2012; Toom *et al.*, 2015). This is potentially important as Clayton (2007) judges that new teachers are increasingly operating within high-stakes accountability environments which are experiencing the tightening constraints of government policy with its intensifying focus on test scores and pupil attainment. Clayton is not alone in this view. Troman (2008) and Busher and Cremin (2012) also identify the increasing standardisation of the curriculum and pressures of performativity as pervading the educational landscape in recent years. These are perceived as being the key threats to professional agency and, arguably, result in schools restricting the enactment of teacher beliefs. Arguable this is particularly the case in a subject area such as PFLs, which is deemed to be less of a priority for schools. This chapter has already highlighted the low profile of the subject where FL lessons are regularly abandoned to make way for learning which is judged to be of greater importance (Powell *et al.*, 2000; Jones and Coffey, 2013; Driscoll, 2014;

Tinsley and Board, 2017). This emphasis on accountability, therefore, creates problems for teachers as 'they seek to reconcile the often irreconcilable' (Priestley *et al.*, 2012:106) and instead adopt attitudes of endurance and strategies of survival (Senese, 2007). In these cases, Oolbekkink-Marchand (2017) describes the teachers' agentic actions as being 'bounded' (p44).

Teacher education programmes have been criticised by some for not sufficiently playing their part in supporting the agentic action of beginning teachers, placing too much emphasis on meeting a prescribed set of teaching standards and curriculum specifications (Hulme and Hughes, 2006). Pinar *et al.*, (2008), for example, propose that the field has been 'too practice oriented...and not sufficiently grounded in thoughtful scholarship and research' (pp662-3). It is judged that such an approach does not sufficiently emphasise the need for beginning teachers to develop a framework of principles by which to critique educational theory and practice and which is necessary for the development of professional judgement and transformation (Hulme and Hughes (2006). Swarbrick (2014), however, argues to the contrary professing that teacher educators are, in fact, principally concerned with ensuring that the future generation of language teachers do not remain acquiescent, but rather are well-informed, confident professionals who are prepared to challenge the status quo.

In her work Feiman-Nemser (2001) appears to go further, adopting the view that it is a moral obligation that teacher education should engage beginning teachers in a critical interrogation of their current beliefs, exploring how these are shaped by prior learning experiences, observation of classroom practice, and theoretically framed conceptions of teaching. In this way they are supported in connecting the more nebulous and theoretical beliefs they possess to concrete classroom practice. Only in doing so, she argues, can novice teachers 'develop powerful images of good teaching and strong professional commitments' (p1017) which will, in turn, guide their actions. Such claims may add weight to the importance of those involved in FL teacher education creating the space, opportunity and experience necessary for beginning teachers to ensure that their own practice is more than pragmatic and is instead based on, and true to, their fundamental and clearly articulated beliefs and aspirations about teaching and learning (Ingvarson, 1999; Winter, 2003).

2.3.1 The influence of ITT on beginning teacher beliefs and practice

In the context of this thesis, which analyses not only trainees' developing beliefs about good teaching and learning in PFLs, but also seeks to capture the congruence and dissonance of these beliefs with their eventual practices as they become newly qualified, it is important to consider the perceived potential of ITT programmes to influence this process. Currently, however, there exists relatively little research which contributes to our knowledge about the extent to which language teacher education has the capacity to shape and support the development of novice teacher beliefs and, in particular, the enactment of these beliefs in the classroom (Borg, 2011). Even less appears to be known in respect of the contribution of teacher education on beginning teacher practice and agency (Toom *et al.*, 2015).

The examination of many empirical studies points to the common belief that the influence of teacher education programmes is considered to be insubstantial (Higgins and Leat, 2001; Brouwer and Korthagen, 2005; Soini *et al.*, 2015) with any attitudinal changes being 'washed out' by the realities of daily school experiences (Zeichner and Tabachnick, 1981:7). Research which explores the impact of teacher education programmes on the development of pre-service language teachers more specifically, however, has generated mixed findings (Borg, 2011). Studies by Peacock (2001) and Borg (2005), for example, revealed little change in the pre and post course beliefs of the trainee teachers involved in their research. This is in contrast with other studies which provide evidence of a distinct shift in language trainee teacher beliefs over the course of their programmes. Cabaroglu and Roberts (2000), for example, conducted qualitative research involving 25 trainee teachers studying a PGCE in Modern Languages. They conclude that the design of their programme, which emphasised direct experiential learning coupled with an explicit focus on reflection and exploring pre-existing beliefs about language learning, was instrumental in shaping the beliefs of these trainees.

The importance of reflection coupled with regular and systematic occasions for the application of theory in practice has also been echoed by other scholars in this field (Attardo and Brown, 2005; Lo, 2005; Phipps and Borg, 2009; Busch, 2010). Drawing on their own study of language teachers' beliefs and practices in relation to the teaching of grammar, Phipps and Borg (2009) conclude that 'the beliefs which exerted the most influence on teachers' work were ones firmly grounded in experience' (p388). Conversely, their findings revealed that the teachers

who possessed merely theoretically-framed beliefs and understandings about the teaching of grammar without first-hand experience, were much less likely to implement these ideals in their classroom. These findings were also reflected in a large-scale study conducted by Busch (2010). This research involved 381 pre-service teachers and sought to explore the extent to which their beliefs had changed as a result of the SLA course they were participating in and, specifically, what factors contributed to any change witnessed. Busch suggests that it was the direct experience with pupils in the classroom which was instrumental in enabling these beginning teachers to make connections between the theoretical aspects of their taught course and the reality of classroom life. It is recognised, however, that this research stopped short of exploring the extent to which these changes in beliefs became integrated into the teachers' subsequent practice.

If we accept Fullen's (1993) claim that 'people behave their way into new visions and ideas, not just think their way into them' (p4), then it would seem imperative that the learning experiences for trainee teachers are shaped in such a way that scholarship is interwoven with practical experience. Brain *et al.* (2006) argue that it is this combination of theory, reflection and practice that supports beginning teachers in feeling empowered to consider alternatives, to question school culture and policy and to use their own personal vision as a yardstick from which to reflect on and measure their own performance. Essentially, in perceiving themselves as pedagogic experts, teachers might be able to hold authority over and have a dominant influence on the development of practice both from a personal perspective and on a whole school level (Short, 1994; Toom *et al.*, 2015; Oolbekkink-Marchand *et al.*, 2017). Indeed, Short (1994) suggests that affecting 'impact' is a central tenet of autonomy in so far as a teacher perceives that they are able to affect and drive school practices. This in turn, she contends, supports the growth of teachers' self-esteem as they believe they are influencing something that is worthwhile.

If we hope to equip beginning teachers with the tools necessary for agentic action, which is argued to be fundamental to innovating teaching and learning (Fullen, 1993), then it is deemed not enough to simply put forward new ideas and to expect trainees to assimilate these into their personal belief structure. Trainees need, instead, to become skilled in employing these ideas in the classroom. In fact, Feiman-Nemser (2001) judges that the measure of the success of a preservice course is the extent to which a beginning teacher is able to not only express an

educational philosophy for good teaching but also possess the beginnings of a range of pedagogic tools and strategies consistent with that philosophy.

Feiman-Nemser (2001:1024), however, does raise the very real problem associated with this goal: namely that it is not enough for teacher educators to ensure that their trainee teachers have sufficient school experience but 'that they learn desirable lessons' from these experiences. This challenge is exacerbated by the fact that teacher educators have little influence over the school contexts trainees are in or the experiences they have during their training or in the longer term (Nespor, 1987). This remains a particular challenge for teacher educators with an interest in PFLs due to the shortage of teachers in the primary sector who profess to have any particular language expertise (Cable *et al.*, 2012). As a result, there are few experienced practitioners who are able to provide good models of practice for trainee teachers.

This difficulty was highlighted by Macrory and McLachlan (2009) in their study which explored the effectiveness of an undergraduate course in preparing generalist primary trainees to teach PFLs. On the one hand, their study suggested that, as a result of their University-based training, the majority of the trainees had improved their understanding and confidence in this area of the curriculum, with little over a half of them believing that they had developed the knowledge and skills necessary to contribute at least in some way to the teaching of PFLs in their placement schools. On the other hand, however, their research also revealed that less than a quarter of the trainees felt that their experience in school had actually provided them with sufficient opportunity to either observe or deliver any foreign language teaching. This was judged to create challenge for the trainees in being able to see exemplified pedagogic approaches explored in their University-based training. Where trainees were presented with the opportunity to teach a FL, no subject-specific feedback was received and therefore opportunities for them to improve their practice were missed.

The aim of supporting trainee PFLs teachers in developing personal and pedagogic theories to support their practice would certainly seem to pose significant challenges for those working in the field of foreign language teacher education. These issues are further complicated where the practice in the schools in which they are working is at odds with the programme aims and

the teacher educators' own beliefs about subject pedagogy (Putnam and Borko, 2000; Brouwer and Korthagen, 2005). In these instances in particular, beginning teachers can neither sustain nor enact their beliefs as 'the pull of the existing classroom is simply too strong' (Putnam and Borko, 2000:6). Consequently, it is suggested that beginning teachers are prone to disconnecting their theoretically-framed ideals and beliefs about teaching and learning from what they feel able to do and achieve based on the realities of the classroom and school contexts they find themselves in. Their university based training and their school based experiences are, thus, viewed as two very separate and distinct areas of learning (Cobb, 2002; Kane 2007). Illuminating why and when this mismatch emerges is of central importance to this thesis.

Despite the seemingly conflicting research findings, it is clear from literature that whilst beliefs about FL teaching and learning are often deemed to originate from within an individual, these beliefs are shaped by external sources such as knowledge acquired and the experiences they undergo (Cabaroğlu and Roberts, 2000; Phipps and Borg, 2009; Busch, 2010). As such, supporting the development of the beliefs and practices in PFLs for beginning teachers is a complicated trajectory which would benefit from further critical exploration and empirical study (Nespor, 1987; Putnam and Borko, 2000; Cobb, 2002; Hargreaves, 2012, Borg, 2011).

2.3.2 'Transition shock'; a collision between beginning teacher pedagogic beliefs and school culture

This chapter has highlighted research which has exposed the tension which can often exist between the pedagogic beliefs of novice FL teachers and the realities of teaching and the constraints of school culture (Fung and Chow, 2002; Johnson, 1996). This conflict often leads to trainee teachers or NQTs experiencing feelings of self-doubt and confusion as they attempt the complex negotiation of trying to straddle the dual professional contexts of school and university (Brouwer and Korthagen, 2005; Loughran, 2007; Menter *et al.*, 2012). Indeed Brouwer and Korthagen (2005) argue that research has revealed a strengthening of trainee teacher agentic action and innovative attitude during their university based training only to see these actions and attitudes abating as they enter the profession as NQTs.

This collision between the ideal and the inevitable challenges of dealing with the pressures of teaching has come to be known as 'transition shock' (Veenman, 1984:143) and is often exacerbated as being 'newly qualified' is associated with a particular contextual status which is often perceived as a constraint in of itself. Studies exploring the development of beginning teacher beliefs and practices more generally (Allen, 2009; Mutton *et al.*, 2010), for example, identify the erosion of new teacher confidence as a result of their perceived lack of experience which was rooted in their status as novices. This pervading sense of 'noviceness' is exacerbated by the often fraught and stressful transition from trainee to teacher, from university to classroom.

'Transition shock', it is argued, is also perpetuated by teacher educators themselves who hold unrealistic expectations of the ability of their trainee teachers to take a lead in championing and influencing school improvement and educational change. In doing so, teacher educators are deemed to be seriously underestimating the challenges beginning teachers face as they enter their first teaching posts (Brouwer and Korthagen, 2005; Russell, 2007). There is clearly, therefore, a compelling argument for ensuring that those involved in foreign language teacher education programmes forge closer links with schools as a means of supporting beginning teachers in establishing a practice which is harmonious with their beliefs about good language teaching (Swarbrick, 2014) yet reflects the realities of the classroom and school contexts in which they will be working (Feiman-Nemser, 2001).

Whilst this discussion has highlighted literature which appears to paint a rather bleak picture in relation to the influence pre-service training has on the eventual practice and agentic actions of those entering the profession, we can draw a glimmer of hope from existing research. A study undertaken by Brouwer and Korthagen (2005) does, on the one hand, echo the raft of literature already discussed which suggests that the influence of the school context on beginning teachers' practices outweighs that of their University-based knowledge. During their first year as NQTs, for example, a 'latency period' was identified in which the beliefs of their beginning teacher participants were superseded by preoccupations with more pragmatic needs as they strove to develop fundamental classroom competencies. This led to an 'increased scepticism about the practical relevance of the preservice programs they had graduated from' (p212). Despite this, Brouwer and Korthagen (2005) did draw more encouraging conclusions in relation to the teachers' practices beyond their NQT year. They

found that as their experience as a teacher and their experience of their environment grew, so too did their sense of empowerment. As a result, during their second in-service year, the personal beliefs developed during their teacher education programme began to re-emerge and manifest themselves in their practices.

In relation to foreign language teacher education more specifically, Breen *et al.* (2001) and Basturken (2012) also highlight the significance of experience in relation to the increasing congruence of teacher beliefs and practice. They suggest that the more experienced a language teacher becomes, the more established their principles are likely to be and the more consistently these beliefs are likely to be reflected in their behaviours in the classroom. It can be argued, then, that the short-term need for beginning teachers' beliefs to 'go underground' (Brouwer and Korthagen, 2005:213) as they develop practical teaching skills in fact, in the end, facilitates their ability to enact their ideals and shape their practice in ways which are more congruent with their beliefs. Brouwer and Korthagen (2005) therefore conclude that in fact 'teacher education *can* make a difference in regard to the kind of teaching competence that graduates develop' (p213).

2.4 Chapter Summary

This chapter has chronicled the development of PFLs over the past five decades in England and has explored the multiple and often conflicting rationales put forward for its inclusion in the National Curriculum (DfE, 2013). It is argued that this lack of agreement has resulted in a disparity in the pedagogical approaches adopted by teachers as they attempt to translate the National Curriculum into practice in their classrooms (Tinsley and Board, 2017). In particular, a general lack of teacher subject and pedagogic knowledge continues to be identified as a notable barrier to their ability to plan FLs lessons which impact positively on children's learning (Martin, 2012). The resulting lack of emphasis placed on pupil progress is seen as having a bearing on the status of PFLs as a curriculum subject, with teachers prioritising subjects which are considered to impact more substantially on children's attainment and, ultimately, which contribute to their school's results (Jones and Coffey, 2013; Tinsley and Board, 2017).

Whilst teacher subject knowledge certainly remains a major challenge in relation to PFLs, it is also acknowledged that teachers' practice is influenced by the interplay of a number of other fundamental factors (Goodson and Walker, 1991; Pinar *et al.*, 2008). Specifically, there exists a complex and interdependent relationship between teachers' own beliefs about FL learning and teaching and the school contexts in which they find themselves working, and the way in which these are viewed as having the potential to either support or inhabit teachers' practices (Cabaroğlu and Roberts, 2000; Phipps and Borg, 2009; Busch, 2010). In this regard, it is clear that supporting trainee teacher development is an enterprise fraught with complexity. This is particularly so as teacher educators endeavour to support, not only the development of trainee beliefs and practices over the course of their training, but also to empower them, as they enter the profession, to 'confront the policies and professional discourses they encounter' (Buchanan, 2015:701) and to act upon their own convictions (Oolbakkink-Marchand *et al.*, 2017). These issues are particularly significant in the context of PFLs where, at best, there is variability in the quality of provision in schools and, at worst, in some cases no provision at all (Cable *et al.*, 2010; Ofsted, 2011; Tinsley and Board, 2017).

CHAPTER 3 - METHODOLOGY

Curriculum knowledge should not be treated as a sacred text but developed as part of an ongoing engagement with a variety of narratives...that can be reread and reformulated in politically different terms. Knowledge has to be constantly re-examined in terms of its limits and rejected as a body of information that only has to be passed down to trainees (Giroux, 1992:75-76).

3.1 Research as a meaning-making endeavour

This research is conceptualised within an interpretive paradigm of narrative inquiry, adopting a 'patchwork' style framework to support trainee reflection over time (Winter, 2003). This approach, explored in depth later in this chapter, was coupled with the use of narrative interviews as research tools. A Greimasian (1971) semiotic approach was applied to the analysis of the data as a means of eliciting and representing meaning within trainee teacher narratives.

Broadly speaking, my own beliefs about the nature of reality and truth are informed by my understanding and thinking of those who align themselves within a relativist paradigm where reality is considered to be a mental construct, not self-contained and unyielding but rather in perpetual motion and 'continually affected and moulded by one's actions and beliefs' (Tarnas, 1991:396). Knowledge, therefore, is seen as a social reality, value-laden and only coming to light through individual representation. In essence, my stance is that there can be no single absolute reality. Instead I believe that the concepts of experience and shared meanings are central to enabling individuals to work towards an enhanced understanding of their own reality. In the words of Strang (1997):

Though they move through the same world, people see, understand, experience and value quite different things. They can walk around the same water, scuff the same dust and sit under the same trees, but they are not in the same place (p4).

It is perhaps here where Gubrium and Holstein's (1997) exploration of the distinction between the constructivist/interpretivist and the naturalist/realist epistemological approaches is helpful. Both stances, according to these authors, are interested in the lives as experienced by the individual. However whilst the realist is concerned with describing the experiences of others, the constructivist researcher is concerned with developing an understanding of the *process* of the creation of meaning. In other words, the focus of constructivist research is on 'identifying meaning making practices and on understanding the ways in which people participate in the construction of their lives' (Elliott, 2005:19). I consider this notion of research as a meaning-making endeavour to represent the very essence of this thesis whereby both unique and shared meaning was constructed within a particular social context or set of contexts.

Learning is highly complex, constantly emerging, and never wholly predictable (Webster-Wright, 2009). This appears, in my experience, particularly so in the case of trainee teachers with many factors influencing their understanding and their practice as both personal and professional contexts come into play. Their classroom practice can be considered 'mutable', changing over time and shaped in response to the context in which they are teaching (Pendlebury, 1995:59). In working with undergraduate and postgraduate trainees over a number of years, I have come to appreciate how individuals appear to negotiate their pathway to becoming teachers in different and unique ways, and how both their attitudes and actions 'are rooted in their own ways of perceiving the world' (Nias, 1989:14). This very individualised trainee journey, where 'knowing' means finding their own path, endlessly offers us new configurations and makes capturing trainee learning difficult.

Despite these inherent complexities, Goodson and Gill (2014) contend that in order to explore the practices of teaching, research must carefully take account of the beliefs and interpretations of teachers and how these both develop over time and influence their practice. This research, therefore, is an attempt to examine the complex interaction between the web of experience for a group of primary trainee teachers specialising in PFLs, their developing beliefs about good practice in early language learning, and their subsequent actions in the classroom.

3.2 Narrative Inquiry

A narrative inquiry approach was adopted as the methodological framework in an attempt to understand trainee teachers' developing articulation and conceptualisation of their beliefs and practices in Primary Foreign Languages. People intuitively adopt a narrative construct when talking about their experiences and therefore, it is argued, their stories are best examined narratively (Goodson, 1991; Clandinin and Connelly, 2000). In this way teachers' interpretations of their professional landscapes can be explored and the researcher is able to establish their inner beliefs and what they deem as of importance.

Cortazzi (1993) goes further, however, considering story-telling as an effective means for supporting deep reflection on practice. He espouses the belief that story-telling 'effectively doubles the value of the original experience (making it) an efficient approach to teacher development' (p8). It is the potential of narratives to act as 'thinking tools' (Moen, 2006:65), supporting trainee reflection and construction of their own values and teaching theories, which is of particular consequence to this research. As such, this study adopts a narrative methodology in order to capture the experiences of trainees within the context of their Primary Foreign Languages Subject Specialism and to examine the rich detail of the growth in their individual understanding, vision and practice.

3.2.1 Narrative Research – crossing disciplines

Narrative research is not new, originating initially from the rigorous examination of literary works, and it has been well established in the fields of literary studies, social linguistics, and narratology, to name but a few, for many years (Squire *et al.*, 2014). Whatever its origins, the study of narratives has gained momentum and can now be located in almost every academic discipline and professional field (Riessman, 2008). Consequently, narrative scholars and researchers are a very diverse group, influenced by the different, sometimes intersecting, and often conflicting philosophies and corresponding methodological approaches within their fields of study. As a result, narrative research is often complex and contradictory in nature.

This landscape creates unquestionable challenges for the researcher as there exists no single, unifying methodological approach for narrative research which crosses all scholarly boundaries, and disagreements about the nature of narrative research and narrative analysis are widespread (Webster and Mertova, 2007), some of the challenges of which will be

explored later. It is what binds what often seem to be divergent individuals and groups together that is of significance at this point. According to Webster and Mertova (2007), there exists an increasingly commonly-held belief that individuals develop and learn through their engagement and relationship with the social world. The on-going influence that society has on a person, and an increasing interest in how humans experience the world and use language to create meaning and construct knowledge out of these experiences, is what appears to enable narrative research to transcend the boundaries between academic and professional disciplines (Moen, 2006).

Elliott (2005) proposes two divergent lenses with regards to narrative research: the 'naturalist' view and the 'constructionist' view. The stance taken by a naturalist researcher is that 'the social world is in some sense 'out there', an external reality available to be observed and described by the researcher' (p18). Whereas the constructionist researcher is interested in narratives as social phenomena; in other words how meaning is shaped and constantly evolves in relation to social contexts. In an attempt to define a clear distinction between the two approaches, one might reduce this to 'naturalist' researchers being primarily interested in the 'truth' of the events being reported within a story (what has actually happened) whereas the 'constructionist' researcher is concerned with the meaning created from the events (how participants construct their reality through story). Constructionists, therefore, are concerned with the construction of reality and not with the reality itself. As a researcher, I am interested not only in producing accounts of trainee teacher experiences and their 'realities' but also in understanding how these accounts can be understood as an expression and construction over time of their developing understanding of their own social realities (Esin *et al.*, 2014). Therefore my research is situated more closely within a constructionist perspective within narrative research.

In relation to the field of education there is, according to many, a dearth in existing research literature of first-hand teacher accounts à propos the way in which they interpret and understand their own professional lives, the problems they face and the questions they themselves pose about their work (Nias, 1989; Lytle and Cochran-Smith, 1990; Moen, 2006). In his early work, Goodson (1991) also recognised the prevalence of research on teachers' practice but the conspicuous absence of teacher voice within these accounts. If we are to be concerned methodologically with matters of educational purpose as well as process then we

must know what a teacher understands and feels, what lies at the nucleus of their professional beliefs, values and actions. As Louden (1991) asserts:

The teacher is the ultimate key to educational change and school improvement....Teachers don't merely deliver the curriculum. They develop it, define it and reinterpret it too. It is what teachers think, what teachers believe and what teachers do at the level of the classroom that ultimately shapes the kind of learning that young people get (p.vi).

The significance of teachers' perceptions and experiences is what Cortazzi (1993) defines as teachers' 'culture'; and it is crucial that this culture is heard and taken into account if we are to understand how children are taught and to see any real change in classroom practice. The writing of both Louden (1991) and Cortazzi (1993) led me to question the extent to which trainees' and teachers' educational values and beliefs do, in fact, impact significantly on what they do in the classroom or whether external pressures such as school context and national reforms are more influential. My intention, therefore, was to position trainee teachers at the heart of this study, to explore their values and beliefs about effective PFLs, what they hope to achieve as primary teachers of languages and the realities of their classroom practice. I hoped that by adopting a narrative approach to my research this would provide a vehicle through which the trainees' voices could be heard. The distinctive nature of narratives, which arguably makes it such an appropriate research paradigm for this study, is explored in depth in the following section.

Narrative is commonly considered by researchers working within the interpretive and qualitative paradigms, in both academic and professional domains, as a method of research, a way of gathering and recounting human experience. My position as stated, however, goes beyond this, seeing the further-reaching opportunities afforded by a narrative approach. I situate myself closely with Gibson (1973) who proclaimed that 'it is not so much the writer who writes narrative as narrative that writes the writer' (p99). I would argue, therefore, for narrative as a means not only of reporting the experiences of the trainees but as a structure for representing the very development of thought and growth in their professional learning and practice. Narrative in this case is not only the method of inquiry and mode of analysing the data but is instead the underlying frame of reference and theoretical backdrop for my entire

study (Connelly and Clandinin, 1990; Gudmundsdottir, 1997; Heikkinen, 2002). It represents 'both the phenomenon and the methods' (Moen, 2006:57) and is within this landscape that I explore beginning teachers' development of thinking and practice in PFLs.

Narrative research, as discussed, can be understood as a methodology that provides a voice to its respondents, a vehicle through which their experiences, their feelings and their understandings can be heard (Denzin, 1983). This is, however, not a universally-held view and Squire *et al.* (2014) contest that 'narrative research does not 'give voice'...it is more that people give their voices *to* the research' (p20). This notion leads us to consider that no matter what form of narrative data we are working with, be it oral, written or visual, the material is not unmediated but rather composed by the individual in response to a particular social context and for a particular audience (Riessman, 2008:23). In other words, factors such as the respondent's beliefs and experiences and the methods of data collection come into play, influencing and shaping the narration (Elliott, 2005 and Moen, 2006), and this can result in very 'blurred lines between what is said and unsaid, what is heard and not heard, what is analysed and not analysed' (Squire *et al.*, 2014:99). If narratives are so compromised in this way, one could question the extent to which they can be considered authentic, authoritative and ethically sound (Gubrium and Holstein, 1997), and these issues will be addressed later in this chapter.

3.2.2 Narrative as a distinctive research paradigm

Narratives can be seen as 'accounts of temporally ordered events, or as developing or expressing personal identity, or telling about the past, or making sense of mental states or emotions or having particular social effects' (Squire *et al.*, 2014:6). Narrative research (or narrative inquiry as it is also frequently named), can be seen as an epistemological exploration which involves engendering knowledge and understanding through the shared relationship between personal experience and reflection whereby events, thoughts and opinions are connected meaningfully in relation to time, place, intention and purpose in order to provide insights into people's experiences of the world (Goodson and Gill, 2014).

Narratives, then, are personalised. They are an attempt to understand experiences from the perspectives of a particular individual in order to create meaning and new interpretations from these experiences (Elliott, 2005). Narratives are tied to specific social contexts and conditions. It is this particularity that sets narrative aside from other methodological approaches and whilst narratives may, according to some, sacrifice generality of meaning, they favour comprehensiveness (Baumeister and Newman, 1994: 678). The interconnectedness of experience, social context and learning means that trainee growth cannot be portrayed in any satisfactory way by the usual thematic approaches to analysis alone which often rely on decontextualised identification or summarisation of interpretations of understanding at set points in time which can be restricting (Webster and Mertova, 2007:3). Narrative research, on the other hand, can be seen as an attempt at capturing the 'whole story', whilst at the same time allowing for multiple interpretations of complex and potentially contradictory evidence. Additionally it allows for a recognition of the way in which one's storying of understanding is shaped over time in light of experience, context and audience.

Our continuous interactions and experiences with our surrounding world are 'woven together into a seamless web, where they might strike one as being overwhelming in their complexity' (Moen, 2006:56). Storytelling requires the linking of such events and ideas in order to make sense of them. It is what Connelly and Clandinin (1987) define as 'narrative unity' which creates a meaningful pattern and order on what could otherwise be considered to be haphazard and disconnected incidents. In this way narrative research is both functional and purposeful (Riessman, 2008), providing opportunities for the researcher, the 'teller', to identify commonality in incidents and to attribute this to themes and to the intentionality of the protagonist(s). Consequently, narratives are not merely descriptions of unrelated events or individual 'slices of life' (Elliott, 2005: 162), but rather are a means by which individual elements can be bound together as a sequence of related events in order for the researcher to examine the uniqueness and complexity of human experience and to render it meaningful.

According to Andrews *et al.*, (2013), narratives are distinguished by their 'attention to the sequencing and progression of themes, their transformation and resolution' (p57); thus, stories are distinct to an individual and carry particular meanings which develop across time and are related to the particular conditions and contexts for that individual. Thus, the notion of temporality is also a key feature of narrative research in that the very act of sequencing

events into a structure with a distinct beginning, middle and end contributes to the significance of the development of meaning in relation to the whole. There is a recognition that the meaning attributed to any given narrative is only relevant at that given time and place and that meaning is constantly evolving and changing in response to personal experience (Esin *et al.*, 2014). Vygotsky (1978) believed that it was the on-going experiences and social contexts in which people participate that shape their development. Therefore, an exploration of how and where learning occurs through growth is essential, and to consider learning or human consciousness as static or fixed would be, at best, misleading (Scribner, 1985; Moen, 2006). Chafe (1990) sees narratives as ‘overt manifestations of the mind in action: as windows to both the content of the mind and its ongoing operations’ (p79). In other words, narrative can be considered as a process of growth influenced by particular contexts and social realities (Moen, 2006). It is precisely because narratives are dynamic that I was enabled as researcher to examine and explore trainee thinking and learning as an iterative cycle. Narratives were told and retold at each phase of data collection as trainees’ understandings and espoused beliefs were collaboratively considered by researcher and participants in light of past reflections and experiences. In this way, narratives became a means of representing personal change and embodying the development of trainee vision and practice.

3.3 Research Design

This research evolved originally out of the development of the Year 2 PFL Special Subject module for our newly validated Primary BEd programme. As both tutor for the PFL Subject Specialism modules and researcher, I sought to capture trainees’ developing professional beliefs about foreign language teaching and learning in the primary school and to understand what became important to them: their ‘uniqueness of motive’ (Toolan, 2001:81). In forming a picture of how they oriented themselves in such a developing belief structure, I hoped to explore the extent to which this acted over time as a compass, influencing and guiding their practice in the classroom.

By way of contextualising the research design, the aims of this research were:

1. To critically evaluate trainee teachers’ developing articulation and conceptualisation of their beliefs and practices for PFLs.
2. To explore the changing relationship between beliefs and practices in PFLS for trainee teachers as they become teachers.

3. To analyse congruence and dissonance in trainees' narratives of beliefs and practices.

The aims were addressed in the research by considering the following research questions (RQ):

RQ1. How do trainees articulate their beliefs and practices for PFLs during their programme?

- a) What aspects of the module design do trainees perceive as being most influential in their development as PFL teachers?
- b) What factors do trainees articulate as being enabling or disabling to the development and enactment of their beliefs for PFLs in the classroom?

RQ2. How do the beliefs and practices of trainees for PFLs evolve and change as they become newly qualified teachers?

- a) What factors do teachers articulate as being enabling or disabling to the development and enactment of their beliefs for PFLs in the classroom

The first research question specifically supported the exploration of the developing articulation and conceptualisation of trainee beliefs over their taught course. The second question was designed to provide further insight into any congruence or dissonance which was revealed in the trainees' narratives of beliefs and practices after they had graduated.

The research followed an iterative design with data being collected over two years in three distinct phases (see Figure 3.1) where each stage was, at least in part, influenced by the findings of the previous phase.

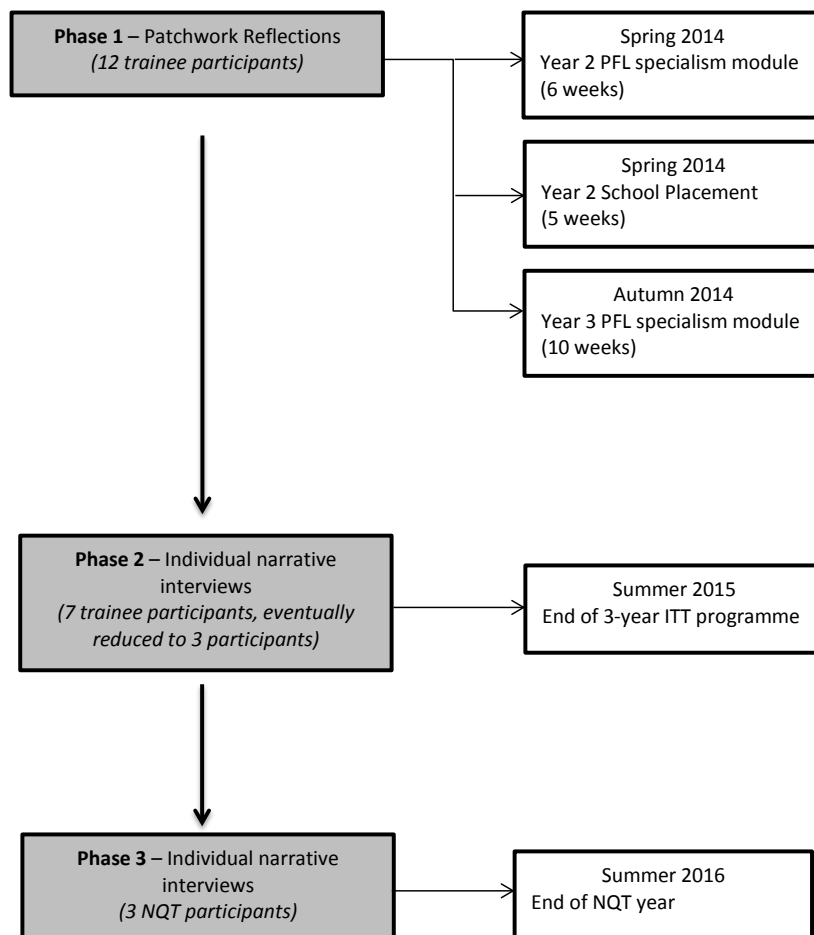


Figure 3.1 Outline of research design – data collection

Phase 1 of this research largely took place during the Spring Term 2014 as the second year trainees embarked on their six-week PFL specialism module entitled 'Primary Foreign Languages: Current Initiatives, Approaches and Research'. Possessing a formal qualification in a foreign language is not a prerequisite of the PFL specialism. Trainees select this specialism each year due to their interest in foreign language learning and their desire to develop an understanding of how FLs might best be taught to young learners. The group of trainees I work

with for these modules, therefore, often present a mixed picture in terms of the languages they speak and to what level of competence.

In 2014, a group of fourteen trainees opted to take this specialism; however, one trainee left mid-way through her undergraduate course electing to take another career path, and one trainee chose to pursue a non-qualified teaching route. The remaining group of twelve BEd Undergraduate Primary ITT trainees agreed to take part in this study and, thus, became the complete sample for this research (see Table 3.1). As the table illustrates, the level of formal qualification attained by the trainees varied and should be acknowledged that there were no native or completely bilingual speakers among the group.

Name	Prior Language Qualifications
Amelia	A-level French and German GCSE French and German
Isla	A-level French GCSE French
Holly	GCSE French
Eleanor	A-level French GCSE French and Spanish
Harriet	A-level French GCSE French and Spanish
Emily	A-level French GCSE French
Laura	A-level French A* Spanish GCSE French and Spanish
Rachel	A-level French GCSE French
Roxanne	A-level French GCSE French
Becky	A-level French GCSE French
Joy	GCSE French
Sophie	GCSE French

Table 3.1 Overview of the twelve participants involved in phase 1 of the data collection
(Names changed to protect anonymity)

Data for this phase of the study was drawn from the trainees' 'patchwork' reflections written primarily in response to this second year module which took place in the spring of 2014 (see Table 3.3). The majority of the trainees continued to engage in on-line reflection with their peers during their second year block school placement which immediately followed this module. Of the twelve participants, only Eleanor and Joy felt unable to contribute to this phase of the patchwork reflections as they were placed in infant schools where FLs were not a part of the curriculum. The trainees were also invited to post a final reflection as a means of summarising their key thoughts in response to their third specialist module. This module was entitled 'PFLs: Leadership and Management' and took place in the autumn of their third and final year of their ITT programme (see Table 3.4). The notion of 'patchwork' reflection is explored more fully in the following section.

The second phase of data collection occurred in the summer term of 2015 in the trainees' third and final year of their degree. The trainees had completed their final PFL Specialist Subject module and had just returned from their final ten week assessed school placement. They were all invited via email to participate individually in narrative interviews with me during their last few weeks at university in order that they could share their accounts of their experience in school and reflect back on their learning over the course of their specialism. It was hoped that these interviews would allow for a deep and individual exploration of how their learning and thinking changed over time and the extent to which they felt their 'knowing' was reflected in their actions in the classroom during the course of their school experiences. I ensured that participants were clear about the purpose of the interviews in advance so that they were able to reflect on their modules and experience in school. Trainees were also encouraged to re-read their reflective 'patches' prior to the interview and these reflections served as the basis for the focus of the narrative interviews which ensued.

The third and final phase of data collection took the form of follow-up narrative interviews in the Summer Term 2016 towards the end of the participants' NQT year. Of the twelve trainees who originally participated in Phase 1 of my study, seven were willing and available to take part in the phase 2 narrative interviews. Pragmatic reasons both determined and limited this sample still further in phase 3. The trainees' availability to take part in the interviews at the end of their NQT year, and the geographic location of their schools, meant that five trainees took part in this final phase, three of whom became the eventual sub-sample for this research.

These trainees were chosen as they represented three contrasting stories, particularly in relation to their experiences in school as newly qualified teachers (NQTs) and the impact their social contexts appeared to have on their beliefs about PFLs and their practices in the classroom. An overview of these trainee participants is provided in table 3.2. The complete data set for these three trainees, encompassing the patchwork-style reflections and the two narrative interviews, were presented and analysed as complete narratives and ‘serve as a magnifying glass overlaid upon the whole sample’ (Brouwer and Korthagen, 2005:168).

Phase 2 (Summer 2015 end of programme) and Phase 3 (Summer 2016 end of NQT year) Data Collection Individual Narrative Interviews	
Isla	A-level French GCSE French
Holly	GCSE French
Eleanor	A-level French GCSE French and Spanish

Table 3.2 Overview of participants involved in phases 2 and 3 of data collection (*Names changed to protect anonymity*)

The rationale for this final phase stemmed from a desire to explore the participants’ journeys from trainees to practising teachers and I hoped that this passing of time and change in social context would allow for, what Clandinin and Connelly (2000) characterise, as reflection which is ‘inward, outward, backward and forward’ (p50). The participants in this research were invited to reflect back and forth between their studies at University to their current role as teachers, inwardly on their own feelings and beliefs towards PFLs, and outwardly towards the professional and political context they find themselves in. In doing so, I hoped to be able to understand the complexities of putting their vision into practice and how teachers negotiate these complexities.

3.3.1 Phase 1 - A ‘Patchwork’ Approach to reflection

As stated, the foundation of my work with the trainees corresponded to a constructivist model which views knowledge as a social construction and ‘recognises the importance of the critical engagement of individuals as they struggle to develop shared meaning’ (Rowland, 1993:32). The Year 2 module was not an attempt to move trainees to a fixed, pre-determined view about good practice in PFLs, but was instead about encouraging them to surface and develop their

own beliefs in light of theoretical perspectives and their experience of working in different school contexts. What was explored over the course of the module and the study as a whole was the trainees' learning processes and 'how these interact(ed) with learning experiences and the enabling functions of the (tutor)' (Ovens, 2000:11-12). The aim of the module design could, then, perhaps be described as 'fire lighting' as opposed to 'pot filling' (Ovens, 1989:18).

The central goal of the module, and indeed all of the modules I teach, is to support the development of trainees' theoretical understanding of the principles which underpin effective PFL pedagogy, as well as the practical knowledge and strategies which will enable them to apply these principles in practice. In order to achieve this, the Year 2 module (PFL: Current Initiatives, Approaches and Research) was structured around a fusion of tutor-led presentations on key issues related to theory and policy, planned opportunities for reflection and trainee discussion, practical activities and workshops, and directed tasks, all centred around some key pedagogic themes and principles (see Table 3.3).

Week	Seminar / Workshop focus
1	Seminar – <i>Challenge, Learner Autonomy and Motivation</i> Children's views about their language learning experiences drawing on research studies
2	Seminar –<i>The importance of writing in PFLs</i> Approaches to language teaching – Grammar-Translation Method, Communicative Language Teaching, Task-Based / Form-Focused Instruction The place of writing in early language learning
3	Seminar - <i>Providing a context for language learning</i> Using and creating stories as a framework for supporting writing
4	Fieldwork –<i>Providing a context for language learning</i> Going on a <i>dérive</i> – a practical strategy for supporting context-driven language learning
5	Seminar –<i>Providing a context-led language learning</i> The role of technology as a means of supporting language learning
6	Seminar –<i>Challenge, Learner Autonomy and Motivation</i> Supporting learner autonomy

Table 3.3 Overview of key principles underpinning Year 2 PFL specialism module 'PFLs: Current Initiatives, Approaches and Research'

In order to provide a space for the trainees to reflect upon aspects of their module, they were also invited to contribute to a weekly on-line forum, in which they were asked to identify their

key learning points from each session and to reflect on their developing thinking in a 'patchwork' style approach. The 'patchwork text' approach was developed by Winter (2003) as a means of providing a structured, on-line, and collaborative framework for supporting trainee reflections which culminates, over time, in a final assessed piece of work. 'Patchworking' as a methodology is underpinned by constructivist theories of learning (Ovens, 2003b) where learning is seen as a gradual endeavour, with trainees needing time to 'digest their learning, to make sense of it' (Winter, 2003:120). Essentially, this approach, where the *process* of learning takes on greater importance, was the result of Winter's desire to support trainees in engaging in deeper-level critical reflection (Rust, 2002; Parker, 2003; Winter, 2003).

In addition to seeking ways of supporting trainees in engaging in critical reflection, the 'patchwork text' approach was also developed by Winter in response to perceived problems with what is judged to be the more traditional outcomes-led teaching and assessment regimes commonly found in higher education (Rust, 2002; Winter, 2003). This alternative model of assessment requires trainees to select extracts of their own patches, and those of others, and to 'stitch' them together into a reflective written commentary, or patchwork text, which reveals what the trainees consider to be most personally significant in terms of their own learning and thinking (Ovens, 2003a). This approach has had a rising profile and is now considered by some as being 'one of the most influential innovations in Higher Education in recent years' (Dalrymple and Smith, 2008:47).

In professional discussions with colleagues, I had been introduced to the notion of patchwork texts and had seen the rich potential this approach had to offer, primarily in providing a structure to the specialism module which presented opportunities for the articulation and mapping of their learning and pedagogical beliefs. Elbaz (1990) claims that teachers' central beliefs rarely need to be articulated in their everyday practice and therefore they find communicating these beliefs more challenging than discussing their actual practice. If we support this view, then it stands to reason that trainee teachers will certainly require support to develop and express their own professional values and to grapple with the constant re-making of these values and beliefs in response to their growing experience. Ovens (2003b) argues that patchwork reflections provide the catalyst and structure necessary for deeper and more fulfilling learning, where trainee teachers are encouraged to become more critical both in their thinking and their actions.

My interpretation of Winter's (2003) 'patchworking' approach involved trainees responding to and reflecting on aspects of their learning and experience in on-line 'patches' each week over the course of their second year module and subsequent school experience. Module content was uploaded on the university's intranet, which provided a dedicated space for the trainees to post their weekly reflective patches and to read and comment on others' patches as the module progressed. Seminars then became a forum in which ideas emerging from their reflections could be discussed and explored. Over time this on-line forum became a rich resource bank of reflective patches which stimulated thinking and discussion in sessions.

Stenhouse (1975) considers knowledge to be 'a structure to sustain creative thought and provide frameworks for judgement' (p83). It is the frame of reference by which we make sense of the world and create our own meaning from it. If we accept this view, then it stands to reason that trainees' understanding of teaching and learning will be 'shaped by personal characteristics, ideology, professional biography and current context' (Ovens, 2000: 208). Thus, Cortazzi (1993) argues, their beliefs, thoughts and perceptions of practice are key factors in influencing their behaviour in the classroom. Inevitably, then, this path towards a sense of 'knowing' and understanding of practice is transient and unpredictable, consisting of many twists and turns and forks in the road.

The premise of this chapter is that knowledge is essentially person-centred and, therefore, Rowland's (2000) view that 'coming to know what our values are is part of the process of putting them into effect' (p99) would seem significant. In order for experience to truly have the potential to shape learning, trainee teachers need to develop a deeper awareness of their own values and emotions, innate prejudices and assumptions. They need to be provided with opportunities to surface what is tacit and to find their own voice (Ovens, 2003a). The decision to adopt a patchwork approach as an integral element of the PFL specialism module initially arose from my desire to better support trainee engagement in deeper-level critical reflection. Over time, though, it also became apparent that this approach potentially offered some notable methodological benefits in relation to my research. In exploring and analysing the trainees' reflections, I hoped I would be able to chart the particularities as well as the commonalities of their learning journeys and to understand more fully any impact the module

had on their thinking and learning. It was also felt that adopting such an approach would provide richer data, as trainees were afforded more time for personal reflection on their experience and learning than interviews alone would allow.

Inevitably, the process of constructing meaning from lived experience comes with unpredictable outcomes (Hulme and Hughes, 2006; Gadamer, 2008). There is complexity in 'knowing' and 'not knowing', an indeterminate mix of cognitive, social, emotional and individual human irrationality (Elliott, 2005). Doubts and uncertainties as well as insights into key learning points emerge and become explicit in the process of critical reflection and it was hoped that the trainees' patches would capture their individual and collective narratives of the way in which they grappled with these uncertainties (Ovens, 2000). The data arising from the trainees' patchwork reflections forms the basis of the collective narrative presented in Chapter 4 of this study.

The use of patchworking as a tool for encouraging reflection was not, however, without its difficulties. Cortazzi (1993) considers that trainee teachers often expect, and even perhaps desire, a 'transmission' approach to their learning, where tutors are seen as the expert, prescribing content and explaining methodology and subject content (p8). In order to support the group of trainees in formulating their own professional development, their own story, it was important that the design of my module and my interaction with them encouraged a reduction in 'learner dependency on 'expert', external knowledge' (Hulme and Hughes, 2006:191). Rather than assuming the role of authority, it was necessary that I redefined my role, adopted a more fluid position, becoming instead facilitator and questioner, challenger and supporter, in order to enable the trainee teachers to develop their ability to wrestle with doubts and uncertainties in 'an atmosphere of openness in which knowledge is in principle, contestable' (Ovens, 2003b:142-143). Some required reassurance in this shift to what Cortazzi (1993:7) terms an 'interactive' approach to education, and expressed anxiety in the early stages about not being clear about the content or style of writing required, particularly with regards to the assessed element. Achieving an appropriate balance of affirming uncertainty, whilst supporting the insecurities of some trainees, proved challenging for me as tutor. It required some very open and honest discussions at the start of the module to ensure that they understood that what was valued in their patches was their own carefully considered ideas in response to reading, experience and the thinking of others (Ovens, 2003b).

The collaborative on-line sharing and discussion in sessions of their written reflections became an important (albeit at first challenging) element to this approach. Initially some trainees were reticent about having their writing read and responded to by their peers and appeared to have reservations about discussing their own reflections and those of others openly and critically in seminars. What the trainees considered relevant to the taught module, what they thought I wanted to hear and even what trainees consciously wished to reveal (or to conceal) will all have determined the nature of the content of their narratives (Phillips, 1997). Broader questions around the perceived 'truth' of narratives are explored later in this chapter. Enabling the trainees to move from a place of insecurity to being comfortable with openly expressing their developing thinking depended initially on creating an ethos of mutual trust, where the interactions of trainee-tutor and trainee-trainee demonstrated respect, genuine interest and encouragement (Ovens, 2003b; Rees and Preston, 2003). The very nature of the subject specialisms made this perhaps easier to achieve than in other modules as the group size was much smaller than is usual, and the trainees and tutor had already worked together closely and established good working relationships throughout the course of the first PFL specialism module.

More challenging, however, was the need to recognise, and attempt to address, from the outset the power relations at play in adopting a patchwork approach and the potential this had to influence the data that was generated (Smythe and Murray, 2000; BERA, 2011). These issues are considered in depth in section 3.4.2 of this chapter.

It is important to note that, whilst the patchwork approach to reflection is integral only to the design of the Year 2 PFL specialism module, the majority of the trainees continued to engage in on-line reflection in this way over the course of their five-week assessed second-year school placement which followed the module. In addition, the trainees also undertake a PFL specialism module entitled 'PFLs: Leadership and Management' in the third and final year of their ITT programme (see Table 3.4 for content overview). Although the weekly patchwork reflections were not an embedded part of this final module, there was an opportunity after the last session for the trainees to reflect on their learning and to consider their aspirations for the future.

Week	Seminar / Workshop focus
1	Seminar – <i>The role of the subject leader</i> Identifying the skills required of an effective subject leader. Identifying the key roles and responsibilities of a subject leader
2	Seminar –<i>Vision, philosophy and policy</i> Examining a range of school policy documents and literature in order for trainees to articulate their own philosophy for PL learning and teaching
3	Seminar - <i>Curriculum-Making</i> Develop an understanding of how to plan good quality, progressive FL learning experiences for children.
4	Self-study Group Task - <i>Promoting Primary Languages in my school</i> Group planning of a whole school FL week which can be used to promote and raise the profile of languages in their school.
5	Seminar –<i>Assessing Pupil Progress</i> Understanding the importance of, and strategies for, assessing pupil learning to ensure progression and continuity across the whole of the primary school
6	Seminar –<i>KS2-3 Transition</i> Developing an understanding of the need for collaboration with local secondary schools and exploring issues surrounding KS2/3 transition.
7	Seminar –<i>Inclusion</i> Exploring what is meant by an inclusive approach to foreign language teaching which will ensure equal opportunities for all. Considering the benefits of language learning to children with SEN.
8	Seminar –<i>Leading and supporting staff</i> Considering criteria for the monitoring and evaluation of PFL provision in their schools. Exploring strategies for supporting colleagues in the implementation and teaching of primary languages.
9	Seminar - <i>Visiting Subject Leader. Auditing, action planning and school improvement</i> Analysing the importance of action planning and subject auditing in order to set targets for improvement. Considering the importance of the role of the subject leader in school improvement

Table 3.4 Overview of key principles underpinning Year 3 PFL specialism module ‘PFLs: Leadership and Management’

The reflections from both modules and from their second year school experience have been included in the data as they were deemed to be relevant in serving to reveal their developing beliefs about PFLs and the way in which these beliefs were enacted in practice. These patches were also used as a basis for the narrative interviews which followed.

3.3.2 Phases 2 and 3 - Narrative Interviews

My rationale for exploring the use of narrative interviews as a method of data collection stemmed both from my research aims and also from the distinctions drawn by researchers within the field of qualitative research. Whilst researchers adopting a realist approach may be aspiring to accurately document and record the past experiences of others, researchers working within a constructivist paradigm are more concerned with uncovering the meanings that are ascribed to people's experiences (Arksey and Knight, 1999; Elliott, 2005). In this respect, one is able to begin to develop an understanding of individuals' lives, to understand not simply 'what someone does in the world but what the world does to someone' (Mattingly, 1998:8).

Certainly in the case of this study, the concern was not merely to describe the experiences of a group of PFL Subject Specialists but rather to allow the trainees 'to make new or deeper sense of (their) own trajectory' (Huberman, 1995:129) in order to fully explore the subtle interweaving and continuous exchange between their experiences, beliefs and practice. In doing so, I felt it important to both maximise opportunities for trainees to talk as freely as possible as well as allowing time for the trainees to consider issues raised previously in the reflective 'patches' written during their programme. Thus, the design of the research interviews became a flexible combination of open-ended invitations for trainees to select and share their experiences and clear sign-posting by the researcher back to particular reflections and issues raised in their patches. Trainees' patches written over the course of their Year 2 module were analysed prior to the interviews in an attempt to identify emerging issues, key learning points or on-going questions for the trainees. Throughout the interviews trainees were reminded of these reflections and were encouraged to make links between these and the stories they were telling about their beliefs about primary foreign languages and their experiences and practice in school.

At these times my influence as researcher on the data became more evident as I found myself in collaborative dialogue with the trainees, working together to draw the threads of their reflections together. It is here where the term 'shared narrative' (Connelly and Clandinin, 1990:4) becomes helpful. In this interpretation, interviews of this nature can be understood as collaborative ventures where the role of interviewer is seen as much more than 'questioner'.

Both interviewer and interviewee are integral to the process as they enter into conversation in order to collaboratively construct meaning, render experiences meaningful (Mishler, 1986:23) and narratives authentic (Huberman, 1995). Data can therefore be perceived not simply as *gathered* but rather as *generated* (Salmon and Riessman, 2008).

Huberman (1995) asserts that the very notion of narrative interviewing 'implies status asymmetry' between interviewee and interviewer which can result in the participants feeling that they are being subjected to 'interrogation' (p139). The resulting data could therefore be viewed as only providing a very measured, cautious and perhaps less than complete disclosure by the interviewee. In order, therefore, to best find out about an individual through interviewing, Oakley (1981) argues that the relationship between researcher and participant should be non-hierarchical. A great deal of time could be spent debating whether this relationship is in fact possible in any research; however, certainly in the case of this study, whilst this may be considered the ideal, my role as tutor for this group of trainees made this both impractical and impossible to achieve.

The very validity of this study relied on me reflecting carefully upon the interplay of my role as both tutor and researcher on the process of interviewing and the resulting data collected. Those working in the field of autobiographical research are experienced in using a narrative interview as a vehicle which allows participants to 'choose the events that matter to them and put their own construction on them' (Ochberg, 1996:97) without being led explicitly by the signals of the interviewer; however this was not fully possible in the case of this research. My position as the trainees' PFL specialism tutor meant that I had already been instrumental in framing the development of their learning over the course of their modules, and this formed the basis of the interviews which followed in phases 2 and 3 of this study. Consequently, I consider that it is more honest and ethically appropriate for me to accept that I could not ignore my professional role and relationship as the trainees' module tutor, or how my experiences and beliefs shaped the very design and implementation of this study. Essentially meaning-making occurred as an outcome of my personal history and this influenced both the development and interpretation of the trainees' narratives. Oakley (1981:156) asserts that preserving a fully detached and objective view when interpreting and making sense of data is not possible. I therefore cannot claim that my formulation of meaning is free from contamination or interpretation (Elliott, 2005; Andrews *et al.*, 2013). These issues are returned

to later in this chapter when I explore in more depth my influence as a researcher and the steps taken to mitigate this influence.

3.4 Narrative meaning-making

Up until this point the terms 'story' and 'narrative' have been used interchangeably and although there are undoubtedly problems with trying to make clear distinctions between them, it was felt necessary in the case of this research, for reasons which will be explored more fully in the discussion around the analysis of narratives. In the context of this research, 'story' can be explained as the fundamental, unshaped material which consists of characters, events and setting (Toolan, 2001). Stories in this instance are seen as the recounting of events, feelings and opinions as experienced in one's personal and/or professional life. Narratives, on the other hand, can be considered as the researcher's categorisation, organisation and interpretation of these stories in order to generate meaning. It is at this point that problems already begin to emerge in relation to trying to make the distinction between story and narrative.

Based on the explanation provided here, a story may be viewed as simply a retelling of events as they happen. Yet, it is fully recognised by the researcher that as storytellers we make both conscious and unconscious decisions about what we tell and how we tell it, in response to our audience and the meaning we are trying to communicate. Our story is, therefore, 'inevitably narrativized' (Squire *et al.*, 2014:24). The concept that the trainees' voices evident throughout this research are simply unmanipulated descriptions of events or feelings is naïve. Rather, it is fully recognised that the participants in this research have inevitably shaped and crafted their stories and experiences in response to the audience (the researcher and their colleagues), and their perceived future audience (the readers), as well as the particular messages they wished to reveal. There is also a need to recognise that when research participants are sharing their stories they are not merely describing events but, rather, are 'engaged in an activity that makes sense of those experiences' (Elliott, 2005; 154) and my position as researcher is one of seeing language as reconstructing experience and not as directly translating or re-telling it (Andrews *et al.*, 2013).

Whilst this is important to acknowledge, perhaps the uniqueness of narrative lies in the very structure created when one re-contextualises a story in order to expose and make explicit the different forms of story, the different time-frames and the different historical and social contexts at work. It is this creation of structure which provides the *why* and *how* to the *what* of stories which is integral to our ability to ascribe meaning to them. Narrative, in essence, provides a space, an opportunity for the construction or co-construction of knowledge (Freire, 2001).

Perhaps, then, it would be more helpful to consider the notion of first and second order narratives. According to Elliott (2005), stories that are told by individuals in relation to their own experiences can be characterised as first-order narratives. This definition recognises more explicitly the conscious and unconscious shaping of 'autobiographies' by their authors. These first-order narratives can be spontaneous or, in the context of qualitative research, can occur more formally at the level of research *method* (through interviews or written reflections for example). Second-order narratives, on the other hand, are the constructions and interpretations created by researchers through their analysis of first-order narratives in an attempt to make sense of the experiences of others. Second-order narratives can be considered as *methodology* or even, according to Elliott (2005:13) as *epistemology*. Situating one's epistemological approach in relation to narrative research is, therefore, essential as this influences to a very large extent the importance placed by the researcher on particular characteristics of the narrative.

3.4.1 The importance of reflexivity and co-construction in navigating towards meaning

The use of narrative inquiry underpins this research as a means of providing opportunities for trainee reflection, because I consider that it is in the process of articulation that we make explicit for others and for ourselves what we believe and what we understand. I have come to recognise, however, that it is not merely in the *telling* that understandings emerge. Instead, opportunities for collaborative interchanges are invaluable in supporting trainee meaning-making. This became a central tenet throughout this research, both in the patchwork reflections and the narrative interviews as methods of data collection. The process of seeking

meaning in the data, then, called for my own reflexivity in exploring my role in the co-construction and interpretation of trainee knowing.

Experience and learning are not necessarily inextricably linked and the idea that learning can be seen simply as a set of personal experiences is contested. In fact, Andrews *et al.* (2013) note that 'the word 'experience' itself comes from a Latin root that refers to test, trial and experiment. It refers to practice, rather than to being' (p61). The simple re-telling of an event or series of events through story therefore cannot necessarily be attributed to learning and personal or professional growth. If, however, one's phenomenological stance is that an experience, through its telling, can become part of one's consciousness, then narrative research could be seen to represent a quest for meaning, for personal change (Ricoeur, 1988). Through the act of narrating experience, we are not only recalling events but are recreating them, identifying the notable elements of the experience, and our reactions to them, for ourselves and for our audience in order to better understand the significance of it.

Dewey (1910) defined thinking as the reflective construction of experience. It is through this process that we are able to define and redefine our personal and professional beliefs, values and consequent actions (Cortazzi, 1993). In essence then, it follows that one can consider narrative inquiry as a sequential process whereby personal experience becomes reflection and then interpretation (Goodson and Gill, 2014) with this process being fundamentally aimed at addressing issues of meaning and personal transformation. It is through the reflexive process whereby one evaluates past events, actions, thoughts and feelings where experience becomes learning. Indeed the very essence of reflection and reflective practice resonate with Vygotsky's belief that 'verbalisation is integral to the creative development of understanding' (Hulme and Hughes, 2006:193). Here the potential of adopting a narrative approach to developing learning becomes clearer as the individual is perhaps able to translate the inward-facing reflective consciousness into an outward-orientated verbal language which provides expression to their experience(s).

Bakhtin (1986) takes the notion of reflection through narration further by asserting the importance of the concept of dialogue in our interaction with both ourselves (our consciousness) and the surrounding world. For him, the interplay in narrative between the

voice of the speaker and others is fundamental to creating meaning. The voice cannot exist alone and understanding cannot simply be transmitted to others. Rather it is the relationship between the voice and others, the active interaction in dialogue, whereby meaning is crafted and shaped. If this is indeed the case then narrative inquiry can be seen as the product of the interaction between the personal experience of the story-teller and the audience, including the researcher. It is in this collaborative dialogue where reflexivity exists and shared understanding can be seen to be created (Squire *et al.*, 2014). Indeed Bruner (1986) argues that, in moving from experience to discourse, reflexivity is infinite and what begins as personal experience is, in the end, transformed into a shared understanding or narrative. This reveals the close relationship that exists between questioning and understanding, where new meaning is born out of collaborative dialogue and reflection. The active reciprocity of dialogue is, according to Goodson and Gill (2014), of 'ontological significance' (p63) as it creates the capacity and opportunity for human and professional growth. 'Through dialogue we understand and we become' (Goodson and Gill, 2014: 63); in other words, in interaction there is potential for transformation.

It is important to recognise, however, that the aim of reflexivity is not to generate static knowledge which arrives at a decisive conclusion. Instead collaborative reflection creates a dynamic and shifting understanding which is both temporally and socially situated (Hulme and Hughes, 2006; Gadamer, 2008). Essentially, narratives afford meaning at any given point in time and in relation to a given context (Esin *et al.*, 2014). As a result, stories are only ever partial and knowledge incomplete. As Bruner (1986) contends, 'new stories arise when there is a new reality to be explained, when the social arrangements are so different that the old narratives no longer seem adequate' (pp151-152). Thus, as new social contexts and realities occur, meanings shift and are transformed and new knowledge emerges and becomes dominant (Bruner, 1997). Past stories and experiences are then re-considered in light of this new understanding.

As we have seen, research of this nature encourages individuals to create and reveal narratives and, in doing so, provides opportunities for the researcher and participants to reflect together in order to generate and conceptualise new ideas (Gubrium and Holstein, 1997). This process, however, is imbued with particular ethical issues which require careful consideration. The complexity of transforming the spoken word, generated for example by interviews, into

narrative text cannot be underestimated and remains a challenge for all researchers in this field. Riessman (2008:21), for example, questions how we can provide a written representation that authentically communicates the dynamic process which occurs between participant and research when storytelling. This is particularly important if one's view is that learning is not singularly a conscious and deliberate process (Goodson *et al.*, 2010) and therefore 'the meanings and understanding that individuals attach to their experiences are not necessarily pre-formed and available for collection' (Elliott, 2005:24). In the process of co-construction one must recognise that the words generated by respondents will inevitably be interpreted by the researcher and filtered through his or her social and cultural histories, contexts and understandings. As a result, there exists the danger of over-interpretation and we must be mindful that 'there will always be material that lies beyond the realm' of our understanding (Andrews *et al.*, 2013:67). The struggle to ensure that narratives are both coherent and 'truthful' will therefore remain an inherent duty for the researcher throughout the research process.

3.4.2 Power of the Researcher: Ethical Considerations

It is critical to the validity of research that there is a recognition of the asymmetrical relationship that exists between researcher and participant and the potential this has to influence the data that is generated (Smythe and Murray, 2000; BERA, 2011). Such ethical considerations are equally important to the generation of the narratives as they are to the interpretations of them. This was particularly pertinent in the case of this study as my role as module tutor to the trainees inevitably located me, as researcher, in a position of authority and power. This dual role of both tutor and researcher was a preoccupation of mine during the design phase of the module and the research.

Whilst the ethical practices as set out by BERA (2011) would be adhered to, such as establishing research contracts that included open and honest information about the study design and the nature of the participant involvement, I could not assume that this, in of itself, would address the ethical implications pertinent to this research and the participants (Brinkmann and Kvale, 2005). I held concerns about the potential conflict of interests that existed in the duality of my role. Firstly, I was concerned about the influence this would have on the trainees' views that they were genuinely able to decline participation (Denscombe,

2010; Walliman, 2011) and, secondly, I was concerned about the influence my research may have on their participation in the module, the openness of their responses and the implications of this on their learning.

In an attempt to address these issues and to safeguard the important tutor-trainee pedagogic relationship central to the module, it was only on completion of the module that trainees were invited to take part in the research. At this point, the rationale and nature of the research (including the outline of proposed phases of data collection) were detailed to them. An opportunity for them to re-look at their written patchwork reflections before committing to the study was also provided in order to strengthen the degree to which their consent was informed. In situating myself solely as module tutor, I was able to ensure that it was this relationship that framed the learning experiences from the trainees' perspectives. I quickly recognised, however, that, for me, tensions in holding the multiple perspectives of tutor and researcher remained (Elliott, 2005; Squire *et al.*, 2014) and I was conscious at times throughout the module of viewing trainees' discussions and reflective patches through a researcher lens. This raised ongoing challenges for me as I began to appreciate that my role as researcher was inextricably linked to my work with this group of trainee teachers (Connelly and Clandinin, 1990; Moen, 2006).

My concerns were, first and foremost, about not compromising the trainees' learning experiences. I was also, however, preoccupied with ensuring, as far as was possible, that the trainees' reflections were true representations of what they wanted to share in relation to the development of their own learning, as opposed to what they felt obliged to communicate. Essentially, I was interested in how the trainees constructed their experiences, rather than a verifiable list of those experiences (Bruner, 1986; Casey, 1995; Cohen *et al.*, 2007).

The final patchwork text element (Winter, 2003) was adopted as the assessment for the second year specialism module. However, after much deliberation and in consultation with the group of trainees, it was decided not to draw on this element of their work for the purposes of this study. Although it is acknowledged that the synthesised 'wholes' of the trainees' final patchwork text would have potentially provided rich data, it was felt, in the end, that including writing they had undertaken for assessed purposes was ethically problematic. The recognition

that what people choose to share and how they frame what they share will differ depending on their audience was central to this decision (Phillips, 1997). The on-going engagement in the weekly reflective patches during the module felt developmental in nature, with trainees considering and reviewing the growth of their thinking in response to new experiences and feedback from myself and their peers. The assessed patchwork text writing, however, despite being crafted gradually over time from their weekly reflective patches, was still considered 'high stakes' by the trainees. They were acutely aware when crafting this final piece of work that judgements would be made about it; thus a number of the trainees admitted that they believe this to have influenced both *how* they wrote and *what* they wrote.

Whilst the notion of reflexivity has been considered with regards to first-order narratives, or the construction of data in the first place, it is also crucial to acknowledge the influence I had on the data as I strove to interpret the trainees' words and the meanings they ascribed to them. This honest recognition is of concern if one is to maintain the ethical integrity of the research and secure credibility (Richardson, 1990; Andrews *et al.*, 2013). In this instance reflexivity can be understood as a recognition and awareness of the researcher as active in and acting on the research process (Elliott, 2005; Squire *et al.*, 2014). Bruner (1986), however, considers the researcher not as a 'knowing subject who discovers' but rather as a 'material body through whom a narrative structure unfolds' (p150).

The notion of researcher as merely a vehicle for revealing the narratives of others is a very contested view with some believing that, either consciously or unconsciously, as researchers we necessarily ascribe meaning to the narratives of others in our retelling. Elliott (2005), for example, judges that the researcher's own personal and professional perspectives need to be recognised in relation to his or her relationship with the research participants and the collection, interpretation and analysis of data. In doing so the researcher becomes 'actively and visibly present' (Andrews *et al.*, 2013:110). As Ricoeur (1991) asserts, narratives are not autonomous. Both storyteller and listener must collaborate in order for there to be understanding and as researchers we cannot ignore that in our examination and re-telling of the stories of others, we are ourselves also constructing narratives (Elliott, 2005). It is in this dialogic and collaborative relationship between participant and researcher where narratives of experience are shaped and joint intersubjective knowledge is constructed (Connelly and Clandinin, 1990; Moen, 2006). It is important therefore, according to Mauthner and Doucet

(1998), to recognise honestly the indistinct boundaries that can exist between the narrations of others and our interpretation of these (p127).

In positioning myself as a researcher in the field of narrative inquiry, I acknowledge my role as not merely collecting and describing narratives but also as cooperatively contributing to their formation. Exploring trainee teacher thinking as an iterative cycle was, therefore, an attempt to protect the participants' integrity, to confirm accuracy, and to minimise the chances of my own interpretations of their patches dominating the analysis of my data (van Manen, 1990). At each phase of data collection their past narratives were collaboratively shared and explored. With regards to the weekly patchwork reflections, this took place in seminars as patches were discussed and meaning clarified. Patches were explored again in phase 2 of the data collection as the narrative interviews centred on these, their meaning and the extent to which the trainees' thinking had developed. This phased approach to data collection presented opportunities for me to ensure that I had accurately represented the trainees' views and to consider with them any potential discord emerging from their narratives and the possible reasons for this. In this way I hoped to encourage the trainee participants to reflect deeply and openly about their feelings and emerging thinking and thus minimise the influence that the power imbalance may have on the data.

The social researcher endeavours to interpret and ascribe meaning to human actions by analysing such events in their natural environment (Erickson, 1986); in the field of educational research this is often the classroom. The familiarity of such a setting can, according to Moen (2006), pose substantial challenges for the educational researcher who is very often, as in the case of this study, a former teacher themselves. This intimacy with the setting and the events which unfold can render the collection and analysis of data very demanding as the researcher struggles to see anything new or of significance. Moen (2006), therefore, emphasises the importance of looking at the data through the lens of theory in order to make the familiar unfamiliar. With regards to this research, a narrative approach provided a theoretical framework which could be considered as an attempt to provide some distance from my own identity, beliefs, experiences and professional histories in order to allow me to examine the setting and my data with a fresh perspective. This notion of being able to examine phenomenon from a new lens is, however, very contested.

Bruner (1986) attests that a narrative is always heard in relation to one's own history and experiences and Gadamer (2008) also believes that, as an interpreter of meaning, we can only understand within the boundaries of our own histories and horizons. Consequently, in order to begin to acknowledge the extent to which meaning construed from personal accounts is shaped by the researcher, we must critically examine how the researcher's personal, professional, and theoretical perspectives have influenced their view of the research material. In doing so, we recognise also the power relations which exist and operate within our analysis and then reconstruction of these narratives. Ultimately this power places researchers in a position whereby they are able to make judgements about what is inconsequential and what is noteworthy and therefore, in the crafting of our narratives, what to reproduce and what to exclude (Andrews *et al.*, 2013). This power extends even to determining the temporal boundaries of participants' accounts, their beginnings and endings, in order to contextualise them and to interpret them (Richardson, 1990; Elliott, 2005; Esin *et al.*, 2014). It was for this reason that, in this study, the entire narratives for three trainees were analysed in full. This avoided the necessity of having to select what to include and what to omit on the basis of what I perceived as significant or important.

The notion that research in this arena is a deliberate engagement in the construction of narrative in order to create meaning has been the focus of this chapter, and therefore the relationship between researcher and participant in the co-construction of new knowledge has been integral to the discussion. What has not yet been considered, however, is the potential impact the research process has on the participant and the ethical issues connected with this. It has been argued that narrative as a method for collecting data can empower respondents, allowing them opportunities and freedoms to share what they believe to be important and to arguably become active participants in the research process (Elliott, 2005). Graham (1984) explores this further in his claim that 'the story marks out the territory in which intrusion is tolerated' (p107), in other words, in controlling the content of the narrative, participants are able to set out the boundaries within which they feel content and secure to reveal personal experience.

My ethical stance was informed by key writers in the field who contest that 'narratives do not merely describe a world already made but are inseparable from the self' (Elliott, 2005:140). As such, the stories we tell always reveal something intimate about ourselves as individuals, they are the essence of our behaviours, our motivations, our lives (Goodson *et al.*, 2010; Squire *et al.*, 2014). One of the consequences of this perspective, as explored by Smythe and Murray (2000), is the perceived authoritative role of the researcher and the possible influence this has on the respondent. If we recognise narrative as representing a sense of self and having the potential for personal growth and transformation then it stands to reason that the subsequent deconstruction, reinterpretation and valorisation of narratives may compromise and undermine the way in which respondents have made sense of their own lives and experiences: their 'ontological security' (Elliott, 2005:141). Judging those narratives associated with 'successful life adjustments' (Andrews *et al.*, 2013:60) more favourably is to be cautioned against. Instead, attempting to maintain an unprejudiced attitude throughout the process of analysis and interpretation enables the researcher to position participants' narratives more firmly within individual contexts, essential in order to redress some of the issues of power relations characteristic of this form of research (Moen, 2006; Andrews *et al.*, 2013). It is this acceptance that narrative and identity are bound up in a symbiotic relationship that created an obligation for me as researcher to treat the data, and therefore the participants, respectfully, with sensitivity and with 'truth'.

3.4.3 Understanding the 'truth' of narratives

As narrative researchers, we recognise that our meaning-making is rooted in our social context, our community, and as a result, narratives are subjective in nature (Osborne and Brady, 2001). It is also recognised that the stories people tell can differ depending on their audience and the reasons underlying our actions (Phillips, 1997). Whilst this allows researchers to study what stories can reveal about the narrators and their positions within their worlds (Squire *et al.*, 2014), it potentially poses challenges for researchers seeking the notion of truth 'beyond reasonable doubt' of the narratives they study (Hammersley, 1995:78). If one's premise is that there are 'objective, self-announcing facts of the world' (Griffin, 2012:288) and that the core purpose of research is to identify them, then the complex relationship which exists between narrative and 'truth' and the goal to seek a degree of formal validity 'becomes a matter of deep concern' (p288). The question of whether the 'truth' of stories can be impartially verifiable or whether they are 'to some extent indifferent to truth (in the sense of

historical facts) or falsehood' (Griffin, 2012:301) pervades the field of narrative research and is subject to much debate.

Some theorists begin from the position that the original intention and significance of the narrator's story is irrelevant and it is the meaning created by the reader or audience themselves that is of salience. Phillips (1997) explores this further in his claim that the reconstructed narratives of the original stories can, in fact, be considered more 'truthful' as the story-tellers of first-person narratives are often not fully aware of, always honest about, or even able to articulate the motives for their actions and thoughts. Thus, the events within stories alone are meaningless and without purpose, and it is in the process of the co-construction of narratives between audience and storyteller, where the audience becomes not only a participant but can be said to co-author the narrative, where 'truth' is revealed and where new knowledge emerges.

This is not, however, to decry the importance of factual accuracy in stories told as resources for social research or to see truth and narrative as irreconcilable. Instead, narratives can be considered as providing an authentic but not objective view on reality (Connelly and Clandinin, 1990). The position of this research concerns the *truth* of a story as relating to the accurate representation of reality for the trainee teacher participants. According to Denzin (1989), this is judged on the extent to which narratives are faithful to both the events which have occurred and the way in which the events were experienced by the individuals. The 'evidence' becomes the product of that given moment in time and context – what is seen, felt and done by individuals as they interact with their world. Researchers and audiences make judgements about this based on the values they hold and their own experiences of the world, combining what they know with what they hear in order to decide whether stories can be believed, whether they 'ring true' and can therefore be considered 'true' (Moen, 2006; Griffin, 2012).

In this way, the analysis of narratives involves the researcher engaging in 'objective and subjective processes at the same time' (Griffin, 2012:300) and 'does not strive to produce any conclusions of certainty, but aims for its findings to be 'well grounded' and 'supportable', retaining an emphasis on the linguistic reality of human experience' (Webster and Mortova, 2007:4). Any conclusions drawn in the field of narrative research should, therefore, remain

tentative and open-ended (Polkinghorne, 1988) and as researchers in this field we need to acknowledge the subjective positions from which we interpret 'truth' and that in our interactions with the social world, our own realities and 'truths' are dynamic and ever evolving (Peshkin, 1988).

Rather than seeking objectivity and validity, the narrative researcher should conceivably recognise and embrace the differing layers which exist within a storied account – the sometimes overlapping and sometimes conflicting reasons and expectations which underpin their telling, each of them as legitimate as the other (Bruner, 1986). If we recognise and are honest about the subjective nature of our work we can begin to acknowledge that everything is subject to interpretation. It is the integrity of the researcher and the way in which claims are rooted in a robust and 'truthful' methodology that supports the credibility of that research. As narrative researchers we 'need to respect the authenticity and integrity of narrators' stories, to see them as subjects creating their own histories' (Casey, 1995:231-232). It can be argued, therefore, that the notion of *understanding* becomes a more fitting goal than *validity* in research of this kind (Cohen *et al.*, 2007). As a researcher within a narrative landscape, I was attempting to capture and uncover the trainees' experiences for what they appeared to be, both at a given moment and as growth over time. I then exploited those experiences to stimulate reflection in an endeavour to move forward in our own *understandings* which may lead to a greater confidence in 'knowing'. Perhaps this could be argued as being the strength, rather than the weakness, of narrative research.

3.4.4 Validity and Generalisability - Narratives as 'open texts'

Within the discipline of narrative research there exists undoubtedly a conflict between our aim to generate a comprehensive description of the individual, their experiences and the meanings they attach to those experiences and the scope of our research to extend to a wider audience (Elliott, 2005). In essence, one could argue that by prioritising the variability of individual beliefs and understanding, generalisation becomes unlikely. In an attempt to address this challenge, it may be helpful to consider generalisability in terms of the potential for narrative research to be both internally and externally valid. Internal validity 'refers to the ability to produce results that are not simply an artefact of the research design' (Elliott, 2005:22) but this aspect itself is contested. Mishler (1986) considers the belief held by some in the field that

by empowering interviewees to lead the discussion, to tell stories based on their own life experiences and interests, the data that is produced is therefore more trustworthy and accurate. It has indeed already been maintained that story is integral to everyday life and that we are accustomed to recounting our experience in this way therefore it could be argued that the internal validity of studies of this nature is strong. It is, however, important to note that this research is different in design to the many narrative studies related to personal or life histories. In this research trainees have been invited to give a voice to their personal beliefs and developing understanding about the teaching and learning of PFLs and their practice in the classroom. Opportunities for lengthy reflection of this kind are rare for teachers and trainees alike (Lytle and Cochran-Smith, 1990; Goodson, 1991) and, for some, the process may feel artificial or challenging (Goodson *et al.*, 2010).

This chapter has already explored my ontological position of seeing narrative not simply as a recounting of experience but as a framework for representing the development of thought and understanding. In this process of rendering experience meaningful, Elliott (2005) contests that narratives 'inevitably distort those experiences' (p23). Therefore, that which can be seen as the very strength of narratives, can also be considered its downfall. Arguably the extent to which the data generated by narrative research can be considered internally valid will be dependent on the theoretical lens through which the researcher views his work and the approach taken to analysing the information obtained. Those preoccupied with generating 'true', uncontaminated accounts of life as it is lived will likely be concerned with narrative fidelity and coherence. Others, for whom the very focus of their research is on particularised interpretations and meaning making of personal experience, as is the case for this research, are likely to take a different approach to analysis or may engage with the data in a multitude of ways. I would contend that it is the openness and honesty of the researcher in acknowledging their standpoint and in their justification of their approach to analysis which enables the research to be deemed 'valid'.

Internal validity, as discussed, relates to the particularity of the research itself in terms of the data generated and the information obtained. In contrast, external validity 'is a measure of how far the findings relating to a particular sample can be generalized to apply to a broader population' (Elliott, 2005:22). Whilst some researchers are more interested in the richness and depth of the data collected within a specific context (Goodwin and Horowitz, 2002), the extent

to which the research can be considered valuable or worthwhile could be questioned if the conclusions drawn were not able to be applied to any other sample or social context. Although the process of narration or storytelling is tied to specific conditions and contexts, Moen (2006) believes that narratives themselves are eventually able to transcend their foundations and go beyond a fixed moment in time in order that they might assume meaning outside the original event. It is what she terms narrative as 'open work' (p62) whereby, in fixing stories in narrative form, they are able to exist and to generate knowledge independently of their origins. They are therefore open to the potential for wider interpretations by other audiences and assume relevance in other contexts (Ricoeur, 1981). In the case of this research, I was not simply interested in the recounts of individual trainee experiences but rather on what aspects of these experiences (both at university and in school) have influenced and shaped their thinking and beliefs. Thus, the external validity (or generalisability) of this research lies in the exploration of the meaning making by trainees in response to their social world and the extent to which these contexts have been influential in developing their thinking and practice.

Kvale (1996) suggests that in the field of qualitative research there may be many different interpretations of the same data or setting and yet these findings may be considered equally reliable because reality is multi-layered (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011). Nonetheless, for research to be considered both valid and reliable it should be open to external scrutiny in order that the researcher (and those for whom the research is intended) can have confidence in the data and the conclusions drawn from it (Hammersley, 1992; Burton and Bartlett, 2009). It is in this regard where the notion of inter-rater reliability became important to this study. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) describe inter-rater reliability as the extent to which another researcher, adopting the same theoretical framework, would have interpreted the data in the same way. As such, one of my supervisors, who was less immersed and more detached from the data but skilled in narrative analysis, acted as external peer-reviewer (Miles and Huberman, 1994), selecting sections of each of the three narratives to independently analyse. Meetings were subsequently held in order to compare findings. Where discrepancies were identified, the data section(s) were re-explored and analysed as a means of coming to a resolution. In particular, I initially found identifying the *sending* actant (see later section on Greimas' actantial analysis) the most problematic as my reading of the narrative extracts was initially influenced by my knowledge of the trainees. These meetings between myself and my supervisor therefore generated rich and valuable discussions, challenging my reading of the

data and enabling me to further distance myself as researcher from my own preconceived ideas about the issues under investigation. Any divergence in our interpretations of the data became less frequent over the course of this process, ensuring consistency and transparency in how the data was analysed and consequently strengthened the validity of this research (Ritchie *et al.*, 2014).

3.5 Narrative analysis – a multifarious approach

As we have seen, researchers in many academic and professional fields have contributed to the development of the present identity of narrative research and it is precisely due to these diverse theories and epistemologies that the analysis of narrative can be considered to take diverse forms. Narrative analysis, therefore, ‘refers to a family of methods for interpreting texts’ (Riessman, 2008:11) and reflects the varied and often conflicting perspectives existing within their theoretical frameworks. In their consideration of these differing models of analysis, Squire *et al.* (2014) make an important distinction between the *analysis of narrative* and *narrative analysis*. The *analysis of narrative* is considered to be the attempt at interpreting and categorising the research material, with this approach having a conventional status within the domain of qualitative social research. It is argued that this approach enables the researcher to ‘analyse narratives without actually taking their narrative character into account’ (p7). *Narrative analysis*, on the other hand, necessitates paying particular attention to the distinctive narrative features of the stories, ‘not just analysing stories in any way you choose’ (p7).

Riessman (2008), however, contends that the diverging methods for analysing narratives are not mutually exclusive. In our quest for developing richer meaning, the application of a specific analytic approach is not required, nor necessarily desirable. Whilst narratives are centred around the individual and the particular, Riessman (2008) argues that the analysis of studies in this field can none-the-less generate common categories or themes in the same way as is typical of other qualitative research. This enables the researcher, interested in the commonalities and differences across groups of individuals (Andrews *et al.*, 2013) to make connections between events and narratives and to assign some significance to them. Goodson and Gill (2014) consider this thematising process as ‘meaning making’ (p81). It is this process which enabled me as researcher to take a broad view of trainee perspectives and experiences

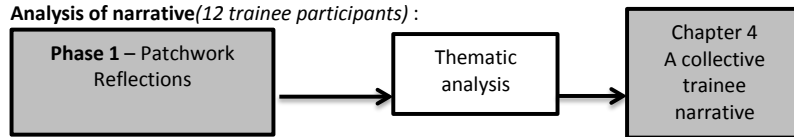
in order to explore shifts and developments in understanding and views about PFL teaching and learning over time and to be attentive to any themes which emerged as being significant.

Whilst taking a thematic approach to the analysis of narratives can offer valuable opportunities for meaning making, there are those who would reason against such an approach. Riessman (2008), in her exploration of thematic analysis, asserts that the distinction should be preserved between the analysis of narrative, whereby the structure and global coherence of the data are upheld, compared with the analysis of other forms of case-centred methods, where the decontextualised fragmentation and extraction of themes is common. Many researchers in the field of narrative inquiry appear to support the view that maintaining what is often termed 'narrative coherence' is fundamental to ensuring the internal validity of the data. Essentially narratives reveal information 'in an integrated manner, ultimately communicating the meaning of the experiences described within the context of the larger life story' (Baerger and McAdams, 1999:75); they are a means of understanding the intricate wholes of individual experience (Moen, 2006). In treating extended narrative accounts as sequential units, we are able to focus on what they tell us about the participants' social world and to focus on their self-generated meanings (Elliott, 2005; Esin *et al.*, 2014). As Riessman (2008) summarises, 'honouring individual agency and intention is difficult when cases are pooled to make general statements' (p12).

In the process of my analysis, I attempted to deliver more than a broad commentary. Instead, I hoped to delve beneath the surface of the trainees' experiences and beliefs in order to uncover multiple layers of construction and understanding with all its possible discontinuities (Zinchenko, 1985; Moen, 2006; Riessman, 2008). Whilst I have made a case for the thematic analysis of the narratives generated in this research, I was mindful in my analysis of the need to ensure that I safeguarded the integrity of individual trainee voice, enabling their *whole* story (as they chose to tell it) to be conveyed. As such I structured the analysis of my data around 'two interlocking narratives' (Richardson, 1990:37) using a combination and adaptation of approaches (see Figure 3.2). With regards to the patchwork reflections of the full sample consisting of the twelve trainees, I began with the more category-centred paradigm offered by a thematic, or coding, approach. In doing so I was able to identify and explore common themes in order to develop a 'collective' trainee narrative. This was then followed by a more detailed examination of the complete data set for each of the three trainees who made up the sub-

sample for this research. This enabled me to preserve the coherence of each trainee's narrative in an attempt to provide 'unique insights' into their lived experience (Riessman, 2008:12).

Analysis of narrative (12 trainee participants) :



Narrative analysis (3 trainee participants):

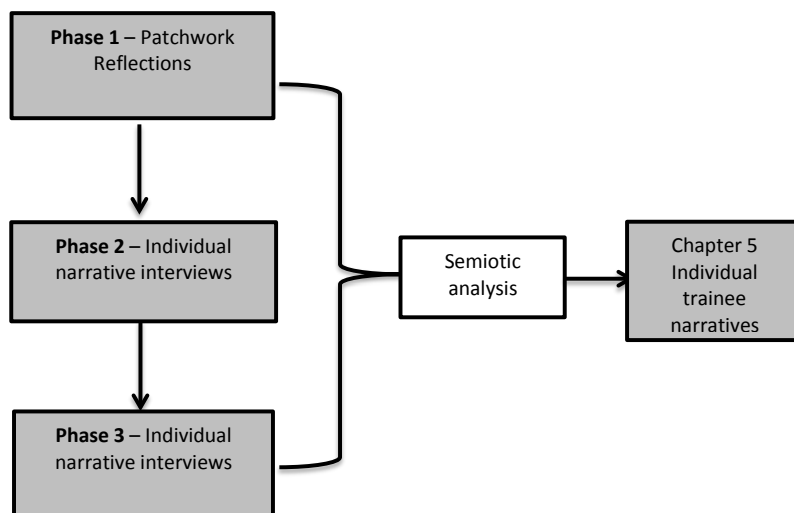


Figure 3.2 Overview of approaches adopted for data analysis

The importance of maintaining a unified whole in the process of narrative analysis has been explored above; however, the challenges of successfully achieving this cannot be underestimated. It is widely recognised that by breaking the whole down into manageable parts it is less problematic for one to make sense of. The whole is then revealed 'on the basis

of an understanding of these parts' (Moen, 2006:59). Wertsch (1998), however, considers the potential pitfall of such an approach whereby the isolated and individualistic approach to analysis can become reductionist, in that the individual elements or parts of a narrative cannot necessarily be reconstituted to make up the sum of the whole. Wertsch (1998) and Cortazzi (1993) consider the possible benefits a structural model, such as those developed by literary researchers and socio-linguists may bring to the debate. The emphasis such models place on the 'internal structure of mutually related units' (Cortazzi, 1993:99) where the interlinking between individual and context becomes possible and the units of analysis are able to 'maintain characteristics of the unified whole' (Moen, 2006:59) could, perhaps, provide some useful insights when attempting to understand the development of human thinking and action.

This theory of narrative as a language, in which its distinct parts are connected reciprocally to its whole, is the basis upon which, according to Schleifer (1987), structural linguistics have been founded. Hedstrom and Swedberg (1998) argue that in order to create plausible accounts of personal experience, methodological mechanisms which enable researchers to focus on the relationship that exists between inputs (interactions with our social world) and outcomes (meaning making) are essential and these mechanisms may be rooted in the fields of narratology or semiotics. Gallop (1985) argues that the story-teller comes to recognise the significance of his or her discourse and actions only through 'the mediation of the analyst' (p109) and therefore structural analysis can be seen as an attempt to make sense of the existence of and relationships between a narrative. In fact, the very coherence of a narrative is dependent on it (Daniel, 2012) and it is this articulation of meaning which Gallop (1985) sees as the goal of structural narrative analysis.

3.6 'Analysis of narrative' or 'narrative analysis' - what semiotic theory has to offer

The process of discovery – like that of an explorer in a strange country – opens up the territory of a text, a discourse, to adventures of deeper understanding and new ways of interpretation (Martin and Ringham, 2000: vii).

Semiotic theory is founded on the principle that there exist many different layers of meaning which can be brought to bear through the analysis of discourse. It is, according to Martin and Ringham (2000), 'a practical reflection on discourse...concerned with values and signification, it tries to unravel the meaning hidden below the surface in an attempt to find sense in life' (pvii). The work of Algirdas Julien Greimas, a French-Lithuanian literary scientist considered as one of the most prominent of the French semioticians, for example, is based on the notion that there exists a 'hierarchy of meaning reflecting the fundamental division between deep and surface structures and between abstract and concrete' (Martin and Ringham, 2000:67). In essence three distinct levels have been identified in the creation of meaning through story: the *deep/abstract* level, the *narrative* level, and the *discursive* level. Martin and Ringham (2000) provide useful explanations of these three levels in their study of semiotic terminology. It is in the *deep / abstract* level where the fundamental values such as freedom, love, good and evil exist and where what Greimas terms the 'elementary structure of meaning' (Greimas and Cortes, 1982) manifests itself. This deep level then gives rise to the *narrative* level where the categorisation, organisation and structural decoding of language occurs and by which meaning is construed. Finally, it is at the *discursive* level where the narrative structures emerge in linguistic form. Here it is the language used, the specific words, that paint a picture of the social world lived by the storyteller. Meaning is, then, multi-layered in its construction and, as such, the examinations and analysis of stories should perhaps reflect these distinct levels of depth.

3.6.1 Analysis of narrative: adopting a thematic approach

My decision to apply a semiotic structure to the analysis of my data stemmed from the principle that in the process of studying the language and structures of a text we are able to move from the surface-level meaning in order to uncover the deeper layers of meaning within narratives (Martin and Ringham, 2000). As we have seen, the discursive level is the act of verbalising a narrative structure whereby the surface level meaning becomes visible through the examination of specific words and expressions. I began my analysis of the trainees' reflective patches at this discursive level in an attempt to identify significant themes, or 'isotopies' as they are better known in semiotic language (Greimas and Cortes, 1982), that develop *across* the stories of the group of trainee participants as a means of exploring trainee beliefs about the nature of good practice in Primary Foreign Languages teaching and learning in order to facilitate the construction of a collective trainee narrative.

Martin and Ringham (2000) postulate that no precise semiotic formula exists for the extraction or interpretation of isotopies as texts are too complex in nature. The decision was taken to adopt a process of coding, described by Lincoln and Guba (1985) as a method of grouping and classifying data which has commonality of meaning into ‘families’ (p347), as a means of identifying dominant isotopies (Martin and Ringham, 2000:8). Two distinct cycles of coding were undertaken in order to organise and link the material and enable the essence of the trainees’ reflections to be captured and interpreted (see Figure 3.3).

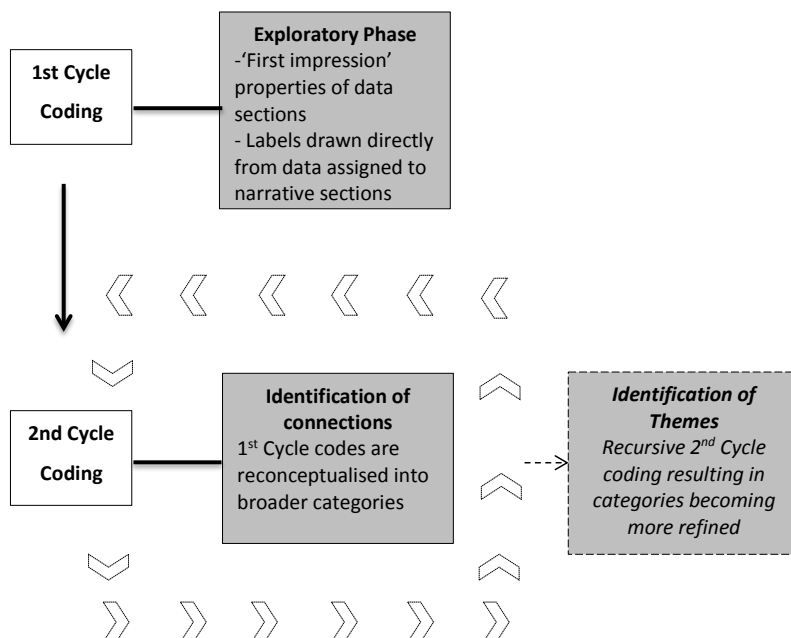


Figure 3.3 Coding process applied to trainee patchwork reflections

In what Saldaña (2016:4) terms the ‘first cycle’, a more inductive, exploratory process of analysis was applied whereby ‘first impression’ properties were assigned to segments of the data. Tentative labels then emerged directly from the trainees’ patchwork reflections. These

labels took the form of key words or phrases found in the raw data and used by the participants themselves as a means of seeking to represent the central ideas inherent in each narrative section (Strauss and Corbin, 1998; Smith, 2000). Data Extract 3.1 provides an example of the way in which first cycle coding was applied. Although it can be argued that coding in this way can impede a researcher's ability 'to transcend to more conceptual and theoretical levels of analysis and insight' (Saldaña, 2016:77), it was felt that this initial approach would enable me to stay faithful to the trainees' views and perspectives on their experiences.

Original trainee 'patchwork' reflection	Properties	1 st Cycle coding
This may be because when reading or writing in a foreign language grammar has more of a part to play. The children can communicate by speaking and listening without much concept of grammar, however when the words appear on paper, things like verb endings and adjective agreement are suddenly visible.	With regards to the teaching of literacy in PFLs grammar becomes more 'visible'	more of a part to play visible

Data Extract 3.1 Extract from data illustrating process of 1st cycle coding

The primary goal of the 'second cycle' coding was to identify relationships and connections present among the first cycle codes in order to reconceptualise these into a more refined list of broader categories (Saldaña, 2016:149). Charmaz (2006) delineates the difference between the coding process (first cycle) as 'generating the bones' of the analysis and the categorisation of the data (second cycle) as 'assembl[ing] those bones into a working skeleton' (p45). Thus, in grouping together elements from the text which shared the same property, it became possible to categorise the data into a coherent representation of the trainee's experiences and development of their beliefs (Morse, 1994). Data Extract 3.2 delineates the way in which relationships identified between the codes assigned in the first cycle analysis led to second cycle coding.

Original trainee 'patchwork' reflection	Properties	1 st Cycle coding	2 nd Cycle coding
However, rote learning does not allow for independently creating sentences and leaves very little scope for writing.	Rote learning barrier to independence	Independently	Learner autonomy
As we discussed in the seminar, giving children word cards to place in order could be considered a form of writing. However, linking back to what Holly said, it is a method of support which we could slowly remove over time to achieve completely independent writing where they take control over their work based on linguistic knowledge and grammatical awareness.	Teachers removing scaffolding and support to allow children to be independent and take control of their work	Independent Take control	
I like the definition of play as the 'breaking or blurring of boundaries' (Rice, 2015:95) and that anything is possible which relates to the derive nicely. There is a sense that there is no set structure to follow and the learner has a lot of freedom and control over what happens, the motives are intrinsic.	She perceives play as having no set structure and this thus affords learners with a lot of freedom and control	a lot of freedom and control	
When this was secure, the children moved back to their tables and had the choice of which type of transport they wanted to write about	Building in opportunities for children to make a choice about their work	Choice	

Data Extract 3.2 Extract from data illustrating process of 2nd cycle coding

As this study dealt with the data from multiple participants, the relationship between the analysis of previous and subsequent trainee narratives can be regarded as bilateral in that categories generated from one participant's data were applied, relabelled or abandoned in response to another's (Saldaña, 2016). Thus, the second cycle coding involved multiple readings of the texts and recursive reviews of the categories generated in a cyclical or iterative process. This resulted in the analysis of each subsequent data set becoming more refined until a point of saturation was reached (Strauss and Corbin, 1998).

The process of categorising data sets does, however, have its critics. Dey (1999), for example, argues that 'there are different degrees of belonging' (p69-70) and thus the boundaries that define a given category can often be blurred and this can pose the researcher difficulties in attempting to classify the data in this way. Glaser (1978) also cautions that the researcher should be wary of forcing data to fit or selecting only that which supports predetermined categories or theories (p4). Richards and Morse (2007), however, argue that the process of defining and redefining the categories ascribed to text segments enables the researcher to transcend the specificity and particularity of the data and move towards 'more general, higher-level, and more abstract constructs' (p157) or, in the case of this study, enables the researcher to move from the real experience as described by each trainee to an abstraction of this experience. Thus, according to Saldaña (2016), a theme can be considered as an 'outcome' of coding (p13).

Nonetheless it was important to be mindful throughout the process of ensuring that the codes and categories emerged from the participants' data rather than being pre-established, and that the multi-faceted dimensions which were encompassed by each broad category were clearly defined. With a view to ensuring transparency in this regard, Tables 3.5-3.7 illustrate the final themes generated through the process of first and second cycle coding and the significance of these themes in relation to the research aims.

1st Cycle Codes	2 nd Cycle Codes (Refined Themes)	Research Aim	
Planning for progression	Pupil progress in learning	Research Aim 1. To critically explore trainee beliefs about good practice in PFL teaching and learning	
Target language			
Appropriate level of challenge			
Use of target language			
Teacher expectation			
Teacher subject knowledge			
Risk-taking			
Balance of oracy and literacy	The role of writing and grammar in early FL learning		
Visible nature of writing and grammar			
Writing as a means of evidencing success			
Teacher subject knowledge			
Error acceptance and correction			
Practical application of writing and grammar			
Independence	Learner autonomy		
Choice and freedom			
Grammar supporting independence			
Structured freedom			
Ownership of learning			
Manipulation of language			
Context for learning new language	Context for FL learning		
Context for applying new language			
Language use for real and meaningful purpose			
Playful	Learner engagement		
Challenge			
Variety of creative teaching approaches			
Lesson pace			
Success in FL learning			

Table 3.5 Themes generated in relation to 1st cycle codes and research aim 1

1st Cycle Codes	→ 2 nd Cycle Codes (Refined Themes)	→ Research Aim	
Observation of practice	The enactment of possibilities in practice	Research Aim 2. To evaluate the factors that trainee teachers believe can support or limit their potential to realise their vision in practice	
Opportunities for engaging in action research			
Opportunities to try ideas in practice			
Feedback on practice			
Perceived value of PFL	Subject status		
Lesson frequency			
Lack of teacher ownership of FL provision			
Low status presenting opportunities for trainees			
Teacher subject knowledge			
Standards agenda in school			
Conflicting demands on timetable			

Table 3.6 Themes generated in relation to 1st cycle codes and research aim 2

1st Cycle Codes →	2 nd Cycle Codes (Refined Themes) →	Research Aim
Structured reflection	Structured approach to reflection	Research Aim 3. To critically review the extent to which module design contributes to the development of trainees' vision for 'good practice' in PFL teaching and learning
Learning through reflection		
Thinking and understanding developing over time		
Community of enquiry	Collaborative learning	
Feelings associated with open reflection		
Co-construction of learning		
Significance of personal experience as a learner on shaping thinking	Personally-situated reflection	
Synthesis of theory and school-based experiences		
Theory reinforcing or challenging trainee preconceptions	Theoretically-framed learning	
Theory supporting the decisions made in practice		
Theory supporting a deeper understanding of pedagogy		
Observation of practice	Exemplification of practice	
Enacting ideas in practice		

Table 3.7 Themes generated in relation to 1st cycle codes and research aim 3

3.6.2 Narrative analysis: Adopting a Greimasian approach

This chapter has already explored the distinction being made, with regards to this research, between *story* as told by the trainee and *narrative* as told by researcher and it is in a consideration of the different levels of meaning, and in particular the *narrative* level, that this distinction becomes significant. As Daniel (2012) explains:

Story is descriptive and expressive; it creates mental images of characters, their struggles and their journey towards their goal. By contrast, the term 'narrative' is more functional, and is used...to refer to the underlying structure around which story is built. Narrative deals not with the descriptive and expressive elements of story but with the way in which ideas are combined (p6).

Greimas' works (1971, 1973, 1982) were focused on exploring the structure of significance in linguistic activity and made an important contribution to the understanding of those wishing to make sense of the nature of meaning. In order to do so he deemed it necessary to go beyond the surface layer evident in the discourse level and explore the dynamic, non-linear trajectory of the more abstract *narrative level*. This, it is believed, enables the researcher to uncover not only the deep structure of narrative but also to expose the very structure of human thinking and behaviour (Cortazzi, 1993; Daniel 2012).

In order to examine the underlying structure of narratives, the way in which forces act on and shape the discourse (Daniel, 2012), Greimas' (1971) actantial framework for analysis was conceived. This schema delineates the implications in language of relationships and connections in creating a meaningful whole and was founded on the narrative taxonomy developed by Vladimir Propp. In his study of Russian folk-tales, Propp (1968) proposed that the organisation of plot consists of thirty-one fundamental units of narration, or 'functions', and seven 'spheres of action' e.g. helper, villain etc. These functions and spheres of action, which remain constant in all folktales, create the underlying structure around which ideas are combined and stories are developed (Cortazzi, 1993; Martin and Ringham, 2000). Greimas' actantial narrative schema, though inspired by, and adapted from, Propp's spheres of action suggests instead that the driving force or backbone of all narratives are three pairs of binary opposites, or 'actants'; the *subject* and *object*, the *sender* and *receiver*, and the *helper* and *opponent*. These actants, which can also be understood as functions or 'that which

accomplishes or undergoes an act' (Schleiffer, 1987:88), and can apply to abstract concepts as well as to individuals, places or objects, provide a structure for analysing the underlying meaning in narratives (see Figure 3.4).

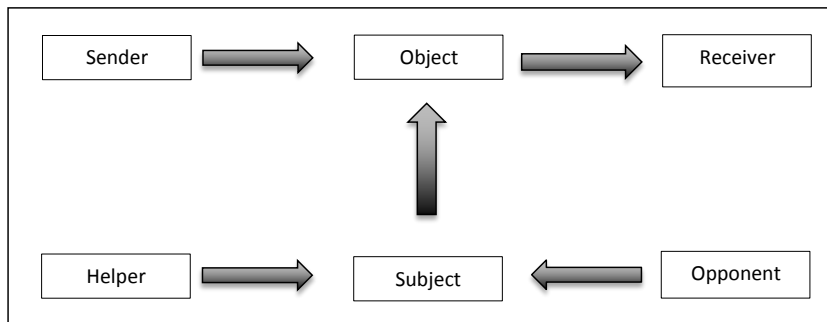


Figure 3.4 Greimasian Model of Actantial Analysis (Schleiffer, 1987:186)

The most fundamental relationship within a narrative is considered to be that which exists between a *subject* and an *object*. The *subject* adopts a central role in the narrative, seeking to attain his / her *object* of desire. The *object* can thus be considered 'the goal towards which the subject's actions...are directed' (Fiol, 1990:381) and thus become the focal point of the narrative schema (Martin and Ringham, 2000:19). The relationship which exists between a *sender* and a *receiver* is also judged to be central to a narrative. The *sender* is the actant that motivates the subject to seek its object of desire and the *receiver* is the perceived beneficiary of the successful achievement of the object (Fiol, 1990). The final pair of actants, the *helper* and *opponent*, assume a paradigmatically opposing relationship to one another, their function being to either intervene positively or to thwart the subject's realization of the object.

Following the discursive level thematic analysis of the patchwork reflections, detailed analysis of three individual trainee narratives have been presented as a means of exploring the changing relationship between vision and practice for these trainees as they become teachers. The patchwork reflections and subsequent two interviews involving Isla, Holly, and Eleanor are represented as three complete episodic monologues (see Appendices 2 and 3). The rationale for presenting the trainees' narratives in this way is two-fold. Firstly, the episodes correspond to what could be considered as the beginning, middle, and end of their individual stories at this stage in their development as teachers. This helps to preserve the notion of temporality. This

is significant as narratives are distinguished by the progression of themes and the way in which the development of meaning is revealed over time (Andrews *et al.*, 2013). Secondly, Baumeister and Newman (1994) argue that narratives are tied to specific contexts and conditions in that the particularities of the environments in which the authors find themselves will inevitably influence the development of their storied accounts. Presenting the data in this way, therefore, enables the interconnectedness of the trainees' learning to their specific experiences and social contexts to be explicitly captured (Webster and Mertova, 2007).

Although, on the one hand, it has been important to ensure that the integrity of the trainees' stories is preserved, on the other it must be acknowledged that in crafting and presenting the data as described above, the trainees' stories are not unmediated but have inevitably been 'narrativized' (Squire *et al.*, 2014:24). In other words, the very process of interacting with the data has contributed to a new narrative being constructed (Elliott, 2005). Any manipulation of the raw data has been restricted as far as was possible. However in crafting and presenting the trainees' stories as monologues, it has been necessary, for example, to include additional words or phrases in order to clarify meaning or to connect ideas. Whilst Freire (2001) argues that it is the interpretation and construction of story into a narrative structure which is integral to our ability to ascribe meaning to it, there is a danger of over-interpretation or even misinterpretation as the words generated are inevitably influenced by my own personal, professional and theoretical perspectives (Bruner, 1986; Gadamer, 2008; Andrews *et al.*, 2013). Italics have therefore been used where words have been added in order to ensure that all such interactions are transparent within the presentation of the data and wherever possible the wording is taken from the interviewer's original questions, which enables the reader to see what prompted the trainee's response.

There are also occasions within episodes where the order of some aspects of the original transcripts has been changed to situate reflections on similar issues or the same events together. Whilst it could be reasoned that this manipulation of data compromises the temporal nature of the narrative, this process was deemed important at times as a means of linking incidents and ideas to support a more coherent thread of discussion and to be able to more easily ascribe meaning to what could otherwise be read as disconnected elements of trainees' stories (Connelly and Clandinin, 1987). As such, I would argue that the extent to which the trainees' narratives are revealed as being connected to time and context is, in fact,

strengthened as a result of this manipulation (Goodson and Gill, 2014). Where linking of events or themes has occurred, this has been made explicit as italicised transcription references (*TR*) have been identified throughout the presentation of the data to enable narrative extracts to be cross-referenced with the original transcripts.

As a means of analysis, Greimas' (1971) actantial narrative schema was applied and is presented alongside the trainees' narrative monologues in synchronous form in order that the actantial roles evident within each narrative section could be revealed and examined. As has been explored in this section, this approach to semiotic analysis offered a structural model whereby the surface level of the text could be categorised and interpreted according to a set of precise rules as a means of revealing the underlying structure of the narratives and the forces which acted to shape them (Daniel, 2012). In adopting this approach there was also an attempt to provide some distance between the data and my own personal, professional, and theoretical perspectives which arguably allowed me to examine the data from a more impartial perspective (Moen, 2006; Gadamer, 2008). The process of applying Greimas' actantial schema involved subjecting the data to two stages (or 'passes') of analysis, as described by Fiol (1990) (see Figure 3.5). The first pass concentrated on the surface level of the text and involved segmenting each narrative episode into 'programme blocks'. The identification of each programme block was based on 'changes in theme, in direction, or in purpose' (Fiol, 1990:386).

In the second pass, each programme block was examined more closely with the analysis shifting more towards a focus on defining the abstract level of the narrative structure. The object of this second pass was to identify the six forces (or actants) for each section (or programme block) of the narrative and to explore the distribution and changing relationship between them. Fiol (1990) deems this to be critical in taking the researcher from the discourse level of the text and bringing us closer to developing an understanding of the narrative's deeper, underlying structure. She argues that in doing so the emerging structures 'should result less from reader-imposed bias and more from logical relations that stem from within the text itself' (p387).

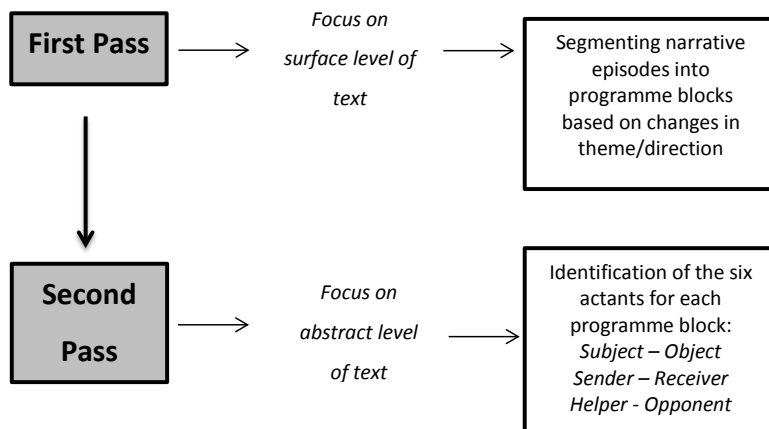


Figure 3.5 Process of applying Greimasian actantial analysis to trainee narratives

In adopting Greimas’ actantial schema as an analytical tool to investigate the trainees’ complete narratives, the changing relationship between their vision and practice was explored. Data Extract 3.3-3.5 present the same narrative section for one trainee. Each reproduction highlights a different aspect of the narrative as a means of illustrating the way in which the actants were identified within a given narrative programme block.

The examination of the *subject*, *object*, *sender*, and *receiver* actants, in particular, within the trainees’ narratives enabled the development of their understandings and beliefs about PFLs to be charted over the course of this research. Although it is recognised that a story can be both told and interpreted from numerous perspectives (Elliott, 2005; Goodson *et al.*, 2010; Squire *et al.*, 2014), this research is concerned primarily with giving a voice to the beginning teacher. Thus, the trainees themselves were consciously and consistently positioned as the **subject** in the analysis of their narratives. The **object** identified is the central goal which was being sought by the trainee within each narrative section. In the following narrative extract, for example, the trainee is focused on ensuring that PFLs are taught across her school (see Data Extract 3.3).

Trainee Narrative	Actantial Analysis
<p>16. (TR26) In terms of the key barriers for next year, SATs will still be there. I think that'll be the first thing. The second one will be getting everyone on board. I mean, I'd love to say getting everyone as enthusiastic as I am, but obviously that's quite a big aim, but getting everybody feeling like they can teach it, and getting them, hopefully, excited about teaching French, but just willing to teach French, will be the first barrier to overcome. Actually going and getting it started in the classrooms.</p> <p>17. (TR27) I'm envisioning myself probably doing some kind of staff workshop near the beginning of the year to, sort of, launch this. I want to do a few different activities.</p>	<p>PROGRAMME BLOCK 9 (Paragraphs 16-17)</p> <p>Trainee's object of desire is to ensure PFLs is taught across the school.</p>

Data Extract 3.3 Narrative extract illustrating the identification of the *object* actantial role

The *object* highlighted in the previous data extract stems from the trainee's experience in her school context thus far. This experience, which fulfils the **sending** actantial role in this programme block (see Data Extract 3.4), has exposed the lack of overall teacher confidence and enthusiasm for this area of the curriculum and has served to motivate her in seeking this object. The children, who profit from the trainee successfully attaining her object of desire, are inferred as occupying the primary **receiving** actantial role (see Data Extract 3.4).

Trainee Narrative	Actantial Analysis
<p>16. (TR26) In terms of the key barriers for next year, SATs will still be there. I think that'll be the first thing. The second one will be getting everyone on board. I mean, I'd love to say getting everyone as enthusiastic as I am, but obviously that's quite a big aim, but getting everybody feeling like they can teach it, and getting them, hopefully, excited about teaching French, but just willing to teach French, will be the first barrier to overcome. Actually going and getting it started in the classrooms.</p> <p>17. (TR27) I'm envisioning myself probably doing some kind of staff workshop near the beginning of the year to, sort of, launch this. I want to do a few different activities.</p>	<p>PROGRAMME BLOCK 9 (Paragraphs 16-17)</p> <p>Experience of her school context where teachers are reluctant to teach PFLs is the sending actant.</p> <p>Although not explicitly identified, it can be inferred that the children in the school occupy the actantial position of receiver.</p>

Data Extract 3.4 Narrative extract illustrating the identification of the *sender* and *receiver* actantial roles

In identifying the relationship between the *helping* and the *opposing* forces in each programme block, the factors believed by the trainees to have supported or limited their potential to realise their vision in practice in the classroom could be examined. For example, in the following narrative extract although the trainee recognises the SATs tests as being an on-going challenge, her narrative here is particularly focused on how she might overcome the teachers' current negative attitudes and lack of confidence. The reluctance of her colleagues to engage in the teaching thus becomes the primary **opposing** force in this programme block (see Data Extract 3.5). Despite these opposing forces, however, the trainee appears to retain an optimistic view of her potential ability to realise her goal. Thus, we can infer that her own pedagogic understanding has had a dominant influence over the development of her own sense of agency and empowerment (Maeroff, 1988; Glenn, 1990). Her resulting confidence and willingness to take a lead role in developing the subject can be regarded as having important **helping** roles in enabling her future success (see Data Extract 3.5).

Trainee Narrative	Actantial Analysis
<p>16. (TR26) In terms of the key barriers for next year, SATs will still be there. I think that'll be the first thing. The second one will be getting everyone on board. I mean, I'd love to say getting everyone as enthusiastic as I am, but obviously that's quite a big aim, but getting everybody feeling like they can teach it, and getting them, hopefully, excited about teaching French, but just willing to teach French, will be the first barrier to overcome. Actually going and getting it started in the classrooms.</p> <p>17. (TR27) I'm envisioning myself probably doing some kind of staff workshop near the beginning of the year to, sort of, launch this. I want to do a few different activities.</p>	<p>PROGRAMME BLOCK 9 (Paragraphs 16-17)</p> <p>The teachers' current negative attitudes and lack of confidence fulfil the primary opposing force.</p> <p>The trainee's confidence and willingness to take a lead role in the school in developing the subject can be regarded as having important helping roles in enabling her future success.</p>

Data Extract 3.5 Narrative extract illustrating the identification of the *opposing* and *helping* actantial roles

3.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented and explored narrative inquiry as the methodological backdrop for this study. Narratives are personalised and tied to specific social contexts and conditions. They are an attempt to provide insights into people's experiences of the world in order to create meaning and new interpretations from these experiences (Elliott, 2005; Goodson and Gill, 2014). I have argued that this choice is aligned with my own theoretical position as a researcher; in that I believe an individual's understanding evolves and is shaped in complex ways over time and in response to their engagement and relationship with the social world (Webster and Mertova, 2007; Esin *et al.*, 2014).

The emphasis of this research, as outlined in this chapter, was to explore and understand the interconnectedness of beginning teachers' experience, social context and learning, and to capture the influence of these factors on their beliefs and eventual practices in PFLs (Goodson and Gill, 2014). Narrative was therefore selected as the paradigm which provided coherence to the methods of inquiry and provided a lens through which the data was analysed (Connelly

and Clandinin, 1990; Heikkinen, 2002). The research design, methods for data collection, and the process of analysis have been outlined in full in this chapter.

The ethical considerations, particularly with regards to the power relations inherent in the duality of my role as tutor and researcher have been considered in depth (Smythe and Murray, 2000; BERA, 2011). In addition, it has been important to recognise openly and honestly the power I held as researcher during the process of constructing and interpreting the trainees' narratives. The notion of first and second-order narratives have been explored as a means of distinguishing between the stories as told by the individual participants and the 'narrativized' (Squire *et al.*, 2014:24) versions of those stories. Measures to ensure the integrity and reliability of the research have also been carefully considered, particularly in relation to the way in which the 'truth' of the trainees' narratives might be understood.

The presentation and analysis of the data from this research begins in Chapter 4 with an exploration of the patchwork reflections of the full sample of trainee participants. A thematic approach to the analysis of this data was adopted as a means of taking a broader view of trainee perspectives and experiences, and identifying and exploring the common themes emerging in relation to their beliefs and understandings about PFLs teaching and learning.

This is then followed, in Chapter 5, by a presentation of the complete data set, or *whole story*, for each of the three trainees who made up the sub-sample for this research. It has been argued that in doing so this has helped to safeguard the integrity of their individual voices and experiences. Greimas' (1971) actantial narrative schema was applied to these narratives in order to reveal the forces which acted to shape them (Daniel, 2012) and to provide insights into the changing relationship between their vision for PFLs and their practice as they became teachers (Riessman, 2008).

CHAPTER 4 – PATCHWORK REFLECTIONS: A COLLECTIVE TRAINEE NARRATIVE

This study set out, in part, to explore the development of the beliefs and understandings of PFLs learning and teaching of a group of undergraduate primary trainee teachers. In addition, this research sought to examine the influences which informed and shaped their beliefs and classroom practice in this curriculum subject over the course of their university-based training. This chapter draws on the first phase of data collection: the patchwork reflections undertaken by the twelve trainee teachers who selected PFLs as their specialist subject. In the main these reflections occurred over the course of their second year specialist module entitled ‘PFLs: Current Initiatives, Approaches and Research’. By way of a recap, Table 4.1 provides a summary content of this module.

Week	Seminar / Workshop focus
1	<i>Seminar – Challenge, Learner Autonomy and Motivation</i> Children’s views about their language learning experiences drawing on research studies
2	<i>Seminar –The importance of writing in PFLs</i> Approaches to language teaching – Grammar-Translation Method, Communicative Language Teaching, Task-Based / Form-Focused Instruction The place of writing in early language learning
3	<i>Seminar - Providing a context for language learning</i> Using and creating stories as a framework for supporting writing
4	<i>Fieldwork –Providing a context for language learning</i> Going on a <i>dérive</i> – a practical strategy for supporting context-driven language learning
5	<i>Seminar –Providing a context-led language learning</i> The role of technology as a means of supporting language learning
6	<i>Seminar –Challenge, Learner Autonomy and Motivation</i> Supporting learner autonomy

Table 4.1 Summary Content of Year 2 PFL Specialist module

The majority of the trainees continued to engage in on-line reflection with their peers during their second year block school placement which immediately followed this module. Of the twelve participants, only Eleanor and Joy felt unable to contribute to this phase of the patchwork reflections as they were placed in infant schools where FLs were not a part of the

curriculum. The trainees were also invited to post a final reflection as a means of summarising their key thoughts in response to their third specialist module. This module was entitled 'PFLs: Leadership and Management' and took place in the third and final year of their ITT programme (Table 4.2 provides a summary content of this module). The reflections from both their school experience and from their final module have been included in the data as they were deemed to be relevant in serving to reveal their developing beliefs about PFLs and the extent to which the trainees were able to enact these beliefs in the classroom.

Week	Seminar / Workshop focus
1	Seminar – The role of the subject leader Identifying the skills required of an effective subject leader. Identifying the key roles and responsibilities of a subject leader
2	Seminar –Vision, philosophy and policy Examining a range of school policy documents and literature in order for trainees to articulate their own philosophy for PL learning and teaching
3	Seminar - Curriculum-Making Develop an understanding of how to plan good quality, progressive FL learning experiences for children.
4	Self-study Group Task - Promoting Primary Languages in my school Group planning of a whole school FL week which can be used to promote and raise the profile of languages in their school.
5	Seminar –Assessing Pupil Progress Understanding the importance of, and strategies for, assessing pupil learning to ensure progression and continuity across the whole of the primary school
6	Seminar –KS2-3 Transition Developing an understanding of the need for collaboration with local secondary schools and exploring issues surrounding KS2/3 transition.
7	Seminar –Inclusion Exploring what is meant by an inclusive approach to foreign language teaching which will ensure equal opportunities for all. Considering the benefits of language learning to children with SEN.
8	Seminar –Leading and supporting staff Considering criteria for the monitoring and evaluation of PFL provision in their schools. Exploring strategies for supporting colleagues in the implementation and teaching of primary languages.
9	Seminar - Visiting Subject Leader. Auditing, action planning and school improvement Analysing the importance of action planning and subject auditing in order to set targets for improvement. Considering the importance of the role of the subject leader in school improvement

Table 4.2 Summary Content of Year 3 PFL Specialist module

A paradigmatic, atemporal approach to analysis was applied to the trainees' patchwork reflections as a means of identifying the prominent themes, or 'isotopies' emerging from these reflections (Greimas and Courtes, 1982; Martin and Ringham, 2000). Adopting the more category-centred paradigm provided by a coding approach enabled me to make connections between the trainees' narratives and to chart the particularities as well as the commonalities of their developing thinking and experiences (Andrews *et al.*, 2013).

Having applied both the first and second cycle coding approach to the data (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Saldaña, 2016) as outlined in Chapter 3, direct quotations which were judged as representational of the identified categories were extracted from the trainees' patchwork reflections. These are presented in relation to the key research questions as a means of plotting the discussion (Saldaña, 2016) and are italicised in order to differentiate them from my commentary. Synthesised ideas and short extracts taken from the trainees' reflections are embedded within the discussion that follows while longer extracts are presented as indented quotations. All extracts are attributed to their author and pseudonyms have been used throughout.

4.1 What aspects of the module design do trainees perceive as being most influential in the development of their articulation and conceptualisation of good PFL practice?

This study aimed, in part, to critically consider the extent to which module design contributed to the development of trainees' beliefs about 'good practice' in PFL teaching and learning (Research Aim 1). As a result of thematic analysis and coding of these patchwork reflections the following overarching themes emerged:

- Structured approach to reflection
- The collaborative nature of learning
- The value of personally-situated reflection
- The place of theoretically-framed learning
- Exemplification of practice

4.1.1 A structured approach to reflection

In response to the patchwork approach as a method of reflection, overwhelmingly students initially expressed anxiety. In some cases, there was also open scepticism towards this way of working:

My immediate response to the idea of the Patchwork Text was that I do not like it. It is new and it is different. And as discussed in our seminar today it would involve us all stepping out of our comfort zone and into the groan zone. (Laura)

A number of the trainees appeared, in particular, to doubt the extent to which their own thoughts and views could be considered valid enough to be shared in an open forum:

the thought of sharing my opinion in such a way caused me to fear that my writing could be perceived as incorrect (Sophie)

Particularly since entering higher education...I have always felt reluctant to write in the first person in essays or to include personal opinions (Roxanne)

embarking on my own reflections filled me with apprehension – did I know enough and were my thoughts valid? (Amelia)

...when you are unsure of your ideas and how they sit within the course (Harriet)

These reflections mirror Cortazzi's (1993) belief that trainee teachers often view their tutors as experts and thus do not perceive knowledge as in any way contested (Ovens, 2003b). The more overt emphasis that the patchwork reflections placed on the importance of the trainees' own voice in their writing and the very public form of reflection demanded of this approach magnified their anxieties.

Whilst on the one hand some trainees appeared anxious about the value of their own beliefs and views, and sharing these with their peers, on the other hand they were unanimous in their agreement that personal self-reflection is an integral part of the gradual process of learning (Ovens, 2003b). This view is captured by Sophie who identified reflective practice as a 'key theme' running through their programme:

This ties in with what we have been taught at University: reflection is important and we learn by reflecting on, not just literature, but our previous experiences and actions...reflective practice has featured heavily in the content of our course and I have grown to see the benefits of it. (Sophie)

Although reflective practice was deemed as important to trainee learning, and was recognised as having high priority on their training course, a number of trainees identified challenges with this. Roxanne, for example, felt that trainees ‘often struggled to make time for reflection’ and as a result ‘we don’t necessarily recognise how much we have developed our own views’. In this regard trainees appeared to adopt a more positive view towards the overall module design. In particular they judged the weekly schedule for reflection, offered by the patchwork approach, as having the potential to act as a useful vehicle through which they could engage in regular self-reflection throughout the module. The notion of learning over time appeared to be seen as of particular value to the trainees as they recognised that ‘the gradual progression of understanding...provides a greater learning opportunity’ (Emily).

4.1.2 The collaborative nature of learning

From the outset the trainees envisaged that, in addition to the structured reflection time built into the module, it would be the collaborative nature of the module design which would have the greatest potential for enhancing their thinking and learning (Winter, 2003). The expectation that the trainees would not only post their own weekly reflections on the seminars and readings, but also read and provide feedback on the posts of others, was deemed to be a positive reciprocal learning process:

Having the opportunity to comment on each other’s writing gives us the opportunity to expand our knowledge and learning further as it enables us to consider others’ views and also their reactions to our thoughts. I feel that this will be a beneficial way to help us develop ourselves as thinkers and learners. (Holly)

Holly’s reflection mirrored the view of many of her peers who also acknowledged the importance of the social dimension of this patchwork approach. In particular on-going peer and tutor feedback was perceived as important in enabling them to re-examine their own beliefs in response to the views and experiences of others (Gibbs, 1999).

The weekly sharing of experiences continued for many whilst they were undertaking their second year block school placement which immediately followed their taught PFL specialism module; this was in part because the trainees strengthened their confidence in on-line reflection and developed trust in one another. Continued engagement in the patchwork reflections was entirely voluntary, however eleven out of the group of twelve did elect to participate, at least to some extent.

For those who were presented with the opportunity to either observe or teach PFLs, reflections manifested themselves predominantly as descriptions of school experiences and enabled these trainees to draw comparisons, and, in some cases, comfort from each other. Holly, for example, had noted that despite teaching the same lesson to two different classes, the outcome of those lessons was different and she was struggling to make sense of this. In her reflection she drew on the experience described by one of her peers, stating '*I noticed that Emily found something similar, so it's interesting that we both experienced that across two classes*'. In addition, the patchwork reflections acted as a forum for a few trainees who opted to directly seek the advice of their peers whilst on school placement. This is exemplified by Rachel who sought ideas and strategies for supporting a child who already spoke fluent French in her class: '*He is usually very patient and just does the same work as the other children...Does anyone have any ideas of how I can challenge him?*' (Rachel). By way of response, Holly suggested acknowledging his abilities and encouraging him to take on the role of '*expert*' and to model the foreign language for the others. The following week Rachel provided an update on her progress:

Thank you for your advice last week Holly! As planned, I used the fluent French speaker to take a leading role in answering questions and always asked him questions in French. It turns out, he speaks almost fluent French and German as well as English because of his parents, so he sometimes gets confused between the different languages and I have been able to clarify various confusions between the languages in my lessons.

The open atmosphere of collaborative on-line learning also exerted a tangible influence on the nature of the in-session conversations which saw trainees taking part '*in healthy discussion*' (Becky). This was noted by a number of the trainees with one commenting:

The debating aspect has already had a positive influence in session, enabling deeper discussion....specialists in our group interacted by adding to each other's comments, providing other points of view that may not have been considered if working independently. (Rachel)

It was the trainee teachers themselves who identified that it would be as a result of the process of sharing their written patchwork reflections, as well as in their willingness to initiate and fully contribute to session discussion and debate, that our seminar group would develop into a *'community of inquiry which, in turn, would allow for deeper thinking and hopefully more meaningful learning'* (Amelia). Laura noted the positive way in which all of the group *'contributed, extended and supported each other's ideas'*, making a link to theory she has engaged with in other aspects of her course; *'to me it felt like a prime example of the exploratory talk and scaffolding which Mercer refers to'* (Mercer and Hodgkinson, 2008).

It was common in post seminar reflections for trainees to describe in-session discussions as being *'interesting'* (Sophie), *'valuable'* (Becky) and *'thought-provoking'* (Emily). Some trainees identified that listening to the perspectives of their peers served to reinforce their own views about issues arising whilst others judged that discussion brought a *'new perspective'* (Holly), making them *'sit back and reconsider'* (Amelia) the preconceptions they brought to the debate:

At the beginning of last session I felt fairly secure in my understanding that grammar and writing should be introduced much later in foreign language learning but now I am wondering if it should be introduced from the word go, to provide a support to the oral aspect of language. (Laura)

The collaborative nature of the discussion, and the reflection which was integral to this module, were not without their challenges however. Although the vast majority of the trainees claimed to feel supported by the public sharing of individual thoughts and beliefs, and the open contribution of their peers to their thinking, a few trainees at the outset admitted that this process left them feeling vulnerable and *'uncomfortable'* (Sophie). The trainees who admitted this as a potential obstacle for their learning appeared to attribute these feelings directly to their own personalities, describing themselves as *'shy'*, *'private'* (Emily) or *'reserved'*

(Sophie). This was not unexpected as Ovens (2003b) judges that feelings of insecurity are a common feature for those new to this approach.

4.1.3 Opportunities for personally-situated reflections

An integral element of the collaborative discussions which took place during the course of the module, both in written and oral form, was an engagement in reflection on the trainees' own experience as learners, and in particular as language learners at secondary school. There are numerous instances in the data which exemplify the way in which trainees' engagement with research and module activities acted as a stimulus for interpreting and critiquing their past personal learning experiences and practices (Wideen *et al.*, 1996). The trainees appeared in particular to typically select examples of their experience to share which served to illustrate what they considered as being less-than-good FL pedagogy and which reinforced the practice criticised in the research they were reading on PFL provision in schools (Martin, 2012):

The session reminded me how I was first taught French 10 years ago, with rote learning of nouns (colours, animals, and objects in my pencil case) up until age 13/14 and how I probably can't recall a lot of the nouns that were drilled into us. (Eleanor)

Becky also recalled her foreign language lessons, which seemed to parallel those of Eleanor's, as she described how her teachers would place '*a great emphasis on learning lots of words and we were often given tests meaning we had to spend a lot of time memorising a large amount of words*'. Elbaz (1983) and Kagan (1992) argue that teachers' practices and beliefs are heavily influenced by prior experiences as learners themselves; however this does not appear to be borne out in the reflections of this group of trainees. It can instead perhaps be inferred from the data that the opportunities afforded for synthesising literature and past experiences were not likely to encourage the trainees to emulate these teaching approaches, but rather motivate them to find an alternative approach.

This engagement in critical self-reflection also enabled the trainees to acknowledge their own unspoken learning characteristics and the potentially powerful influence these can have on their values and practices (Fullen, 1993; Emirbayer and Mische, 1998). One trainee, for instance, reflected on the session which involved a less outcomes-driven and more play-based approach to language learning. She admitted that '*for someone who really finds comfort in*

structure and planning, [the fieldwork] seems quite an alien concept to me! However I enjoyed it and could clearly see the benefits that would come out of it' (Holly). One of Joy's written 'patches' in particular illustrates the depth of her critical and honest self-reflection as she considered her own attitude towards dealing with mistakes and the extent to which she was open to challenge:

The discussion that had the most impact on me was about creating a classroom atmosphere in which children feel able to take risks and to make mistakes...Trying and having a go are crucial elements of language learning and it is important that children feel able to do this without worrying about getting it wrong...However, this made me consider my own attitudes towards getting things wrong and admitting mistakes, as I am reluctant to make mistakes and so therefore stay in my comfort zone.

Joy went on to admit to feelings of frustration when she was confronted with challenges. She considered for the first time the importance of her being a positive role-model for children and being explicit about the challenges which can be inherent in learning:

I definitely have a tendency to get frustrated with myself when I make mistakes or when things don't go as planned, and the discussion last week made me consider my attitude about this. I had not thought of myself as a role model to the children and your comments [those of another trainee] made me see that by being open about my mistakes and my learning journey, children will feel that they are not alone in the ups and downs that come as part of their learning.

4.1.4 The place of theoretically-framed learning

Trainees were encouraged to engage in wide reading throughout the module in an effort to support their understanding of issues being explored and they were signposted to a range of literature including government policy and documentation, theory associated with second language acquisition, primary foreign language-specific texts and research, and texts relating more generally to primary pedagogy. This literature often formed the basis for seminar discussion and was used to justify and consider the value of some of the more practical elements of the module. Although MacDonald *et al.* (2001) questions the extent to which trainee teachers value the theoretical element of their course, the data from this research provides a contrasting picture, pointing instead to trainees actively engaging in the literature they are reading and valuing their developed theoretical knowledge in three distinct ways.

Firstly, there are a number of instances in the patchwork reflections where trainees identified that the literature they read had served to both reinforce and consolidate their existing beliefs and thinking about PFLs. Trainees were thus enabled to reflect critically on their experience of classroom practice with their understanding moving beyond merely subjective perspectives (Lawes, 2003). In an attempt, for instance, to explore a rationale for early language learning, Amelia considered that the literature she read presented *'a compelling argument for starting early, which supports my initial view'*. Trainees also appeared to be able to link the literature they were reading in seminars with the practice they were observing in the classroom. Sophie's reflections provide evidence of this where she identified that a particular seminar reading on the notion of creativity *'offered another opportunity for me to consolidate my thoughts'* and this was *'particularly useful for me after being in school the previous week and observing French being taught in a year 5 classroom'*.

Secondly, the data clearly points to many examples where trainees have acknowledged the way in which the literature they have engaged with raised questions for them and resulted in shifts in their thinking and understanding. Emily, for example, stated *'I found this article really interesting as it certainly made me reconsider why PFL is so important for children'*. Another trainee explored in some depth her changing views about the place of writing and grammar in early foreign language learning. Within her reflections she explicitly identified an example of research which had raised questions for her:

Cable et al. (2010) identified through research that children have critiqued their language lessons, expressing the desire to engage in writing tasks. My first consideration was why this might be? Surely children like the fact that they don't have to sit down and write? Surely they enjoy the interactive nature of languages, including the songs and games? (Laura)

Laura went on to consider that as a result her thinking had changed *'several times'* and she was able to position her emerging views in relation to other literature read during the module:

It would appear that my thinking now falls in line with what literature is saying, with academics such as Skarbek (1998)...expressing the need for all four language skills to be taught at the same time in an attempt to support the learning.

Holly's reflections on the role of the subject leader in her third year module also provided an example of the way in which her understanding had been shaped by literature as she considered how initially she '*pictured a subject leader as working entirely on their own and being solely responsible for all the decisions made*'. She continued her reflection by recognising how through her reading she had '*come to realise that it is about working as a team and getting feedback from all other members of staff*'. This contrasting perspective helped her '*to begin to feel more confident about taking on this role*'.

The trainees involved in this study were very willing to share such instances, seeming to view having their thinking and beliefs challenged in this way as a positive aspect of their learning journey:

It was intriguing to discover that some research supported my beliefs whilst other findings went against my preconceived ideas...I have learnt how to use research such as this to inform my practice and deepen my understanding...This is the first time that I have really felt that reading and seminar discussion has made such a difference to my learning. (Sophie)

These examples arguably corroborate Larsen-Freeman's (2013) view that research has an important role to play in supporting and shaping the development of beginning teachers' attitudes and beliefs. The trainees themselves appeared to perceive their engagement in theory as a process of transformation (Ellis, 1997) where knowledge drawn from research can be considered as a means of reflecting on their own beliefs and challenging their own assumptions (Woods, 1996; Busch, 2010).

Finally, at times throughout the module, trainees asserted beliefs about what they perceived to be effective practice in PFLs but did not always seem able to delineate their reasoning in any coherent or convincing way. This extract drawn from the data exemplifies this: '*When I came into the seminars, I was fairly certain of my views on this topic. I believed that the importance of writing and grammar is often missed, although I couldn't really explain why*' (Joy). Literature had a key role to play in this regard with some trainees recognising the way in which theory provided them with the formal knowledge and research base necessary to enable them to articulate and also to justify their thoughts and beliefs. In her subsequent reflections, where

she attempted to justify the place of grammar and writing in early language learning, Joy went on to draw successfully on literature to support her argument:

Biriotti (1999) states that grammar is an essential component of language learning as vocabulary will only have true meaning if there is an understanding of grammatical structures to base it on...When children learn new vocabulary, they want, and need, to be able to use it in context, and for this they need some basic knowledge of grammatical structures in order to form sentences.

Certainly it would appear from the trainees' patchwork reflections that the critical examination and discussion of literature as an integrated element of the taught module played a substantial role as a means of both reinforcing and challenging trainee beliefs (Busch, 2010). As a result there is evidence of an increase in trainee understanding of issues raised in their module and their ability to articulate their thinking, both of which, it is argued, are of vital importance in providing a foundation for their future practice (Lawes, 2003; Macaro *et al.*, 2016).

4.1.5 Exemplification of practice

It is suggested that developing practical teaching skills is the predominant concern of most trainee teachers (Hargreaves, 2012; Swarbrick, 2014) and yet it is also acknowledged that teacher educators often have little influence over the nature and quality of the school experience trainees will have during their course (Nespor, 1987). Consequently practical teaching strategies and activities had a prominent place in almost all the PFL module seminars as a means of exemplifying the key learning points of the sessions. Although as their tutor I would judge that the trainees were very engaged in the tasks, all taking an active and enthusiastic part, these seminar-based activities were rarely mentioned explicitly by the trainees in the patchwork reflections. Instead their reflections seemed to centre much more around the collaborative dialogue and debate which took place in the seminars, as well as a consideration of the literature they had been encouraged to read (as explored in the previous sections).

In the few examples which do appear in the data, the trainees highlighted their enjoyment of the activities; '*it was fun to try out some of the activities ourselves*' (Sophie), considering the

practical element of the module as a springboard for the development of their own ideas, appearing to value the extent to which they felt they could apply them to the classroom;

'the approaches we took part in are worth exploring in more detail and I am going to try them out...and see if this helps me to come up with further ideas of my own';

'the engaging activities that were presented to us on Tuesday...I could easily envisage adapting them for my own practice' (Amelia).

The one practical aspect of the module which did emerge as having a notable part to play in the development of trainee thinking was the field work which took place on two separate occasions. On the first occasion trainees were introduced to the notion of a 'dérive', an approach adopted as a means of exploring and describing the local area, the particulars of which are described later in this chapter. The second opportunity for learning outside the classroom involved some field work in woodland close to the University where a number of activities were exemplified in order to encourage trainees to critically explore how the outdoor environment might be used to enhance children's foreign language learning. In response to these seminars, the patchwork reflections provide numerous examples of the way in which the trainees engaged in lengthy discussion and debate, drawing on these experiences to reflect on their shifting perspectives about the potential value of learning outside the classroom for PFLs.

Roxanne, for example, acknowledged a development in her thinking when she stated *'I found the experience of going on a dérive to be eye opening, partly because I had never really considered teaching PFL outside before'*. The fact that this was a new learning experience for the trainees appeared of consequence, with a number of trainees commenting on their initial scepticism and then recognising the way in which the opportunities *'broadened'* their view (Becky). Laura's reflection provides another example of this:

All in all I can safely say that my thinking has changed from quite a sceptical view ...to a more open minded one. It is only through going on the dérive myself and following it up with the appropriate research and readings that this thinking was able to be moved on.

Kane (2007) suggest that it is practice which largely steers the formation of teacher beliefs. Laura's reflection, however, appears to suggest that it is not practical experience alone which

is at the heart of teacher learning, but it is, in fact, the blend of theory and experience which has moved her thinking on.

4.1.6 Concluding thoughts on module design

The data drawn from patchwork reflections appears to point to trainees perceiving the strong element of theory in the module, interwoven with collaborative reflection, as being of consequence to the development of their thinking (Ellis, 1997; Busch, 2010; Larsen-Freeman, 2013). Laura, for example, commented that she felt '*challenged*' by the module and that she had been '*given the opportunity to really think about things*'. She identified finding it '*particularly useful when we looked at evidence...The fact that we then talked about how we should interpret this and how it will affect our own teaching made it relevant*'. In a number of cases trainees identified valuing the development of their knowledge and understanding of PFLs as they recognised that prior to undertaking the module they had had little practical experience to draw on (McIntyre, 1993).

Becky, for instance considered the seminars to have been '*valuable*' in enabling her to reflect on her own vision for early language learning as her frame of reference prior to this was her own limited experience of language learning at primary school and '*not wanting future generations to receive the lack of PFL learning like I did*'. Isla also recognised that when she '*initially chose to specialise in primary languages prior to starting the course, [she] barely had a vision for what PFL teaching should look like*'. External sources of knowledge, in particular that which is presented by educational literature and research, thus played an important role in contributing to the trainees' learning (Hagger and McIntyre, 2006). This theoretical knowledge enabled them to adopt a reflective approach that took the form of well-articulated beliefs which were more orientated towards their future practice (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998; Biesta *et al.*, 2015).

Research would suggest that trainees attribute the practical elements of their course most strongly to the development of their beliefs (MacDonald *et al.*, 2001; Hargreaves, 2012; Swarbrick, 2014). The reflective patches from the trainees in this study, however, would seem to provide a contrasting perspective. Instead, the regular engagement in reflection was

perceived as an integral part of the development of their learning (Ovens, 2003b), and in particular the collaborative nature of this reflection where reciprocal peer feedback both challenged and supported their thinking. Central to all of this, however, was the ability and willingness of both tutor and participants to create a safe but challenging environment (Ovens, 2003b). In doing so the trainees were able to explore new ideas and perspectives, begin to articulate their developing beliefs, and grapple with the changing nature of their understanding in light of their growing experience (Elbaz, 1990; Ovens, 2003b). Roxanne's reflection, in which she linked an aspect of her reading to her experience of the module, captures this:

I found Rice's (2009) comments that play helps to generate creativity and to encourage trainees to 'explore ideas more freely and play with concepts, boundaries and disciplines' (Rice, 2009: p104) interesting as this seemed to me to parallel our experiences in this module...In many ways we too have the freedom to explore boundaries...and within the group there is a clear supportive ethos which allows us to engage in such playful activities; it is therefore easy to see how the way that our module is run is mimicking the way that we can apply this learning in our own classrooms.

4.2 How do trainees articulate their beliefs and practices for PFLs during their programme?

In order to explore the trainee teachers' beliefs about 'good practice' in PFL teaching and learning (Research Aim 1), the following section presents the key aspects of PFL pedagogy which trainees identified as being significant in response to their taught seminars. As a result of analysing the trainees' reflections, these have been classified as:

- The importance of pupil progress in language learning
- The place of writing and grammar in early foreign language learning
- The importance of nurturing learner autonomy
- Providing a context for language learning
- The importance of ensuring pupil engagement in foreign language lessons

4.2.1 The importance of pupil progress

The first seminar of the second year PFL specialist subject module invited trainees to consider a range of research which explored the nature of PFL provision in England in recent years. This research, and in particular a study conducted by Cable *et al.* (2010), appeared to be a catalyst for trainees' reflections on the importance of children making progress in their language learning and what this progress might look like. Sophie drew on this research to identify that a lack of pupil progress is often attributed to '*the overuse of games*' in lessons which tend to be very '*repetitive*'. Her reflections centred initially on her 'surprise' that songs and games are often '*viewed negatively by children*'. This surprise was echoed in many trainee reflections and Holly captured the seminar discussion which took place as a result of their reading: '*when we consider what makes an interesting lesson, we automatically think of fun activities where the children are playing games*'. What appeared to come as less of a revelation to the trainees, however, was the view stemming from research that, for the most part, primary foreign language lessons tend to be very vocabulary driven with teaching focussed on enabling children to memorise lists of items and set phrases (Driscoll, 2000; Watzke, 2007; Cable *et al.*, 2010; Martin, 2012). This, asserted Emily, reflects what she had '*witnessed on placement*'. This experience in school also resonated with Rachel as she described lessons she observed in which teachers relied heavily on computer programmes to teach and revise vocabulary followed by children '*completing worksheets*'.

As the trainees' reflections on the importance of pupil progress developed, some appeared to consider this and pupil engagement as standing in opposition with one another. Joy, for example, took the view that a teaching approach '*which is solely or predominantly focused on games and other more "fun" elements*' led to children feeling '*stuck in a rut with no real progression being made*'. Sophie also began to question where they, as future teachers, should place the emphasis of their lessons: '*I think it's often thought that if the children are having a good time, the lesson itself is good but it is important for us to consider what, even if, learning is actually taking place*'. A number of trainees framed their considerations about the importance of pupil progress in terms of being able to meet the accountability demands of '*target driven leadership*' (Harriet) in schools which they anticipated would be placed upon them. As a result, these trainees drew the conclusion that there was a need to '*strike a balance between creating fun, engaging learning experiences and ensuring that children are learning effectively*' (Rachel).

The data, however, does point to a few trainees who appeared to take the view that children making progress is central to their engagement in language learning rather than being in conflict with it (Tierney and Gallastegi, 2005). Indeed, Roxanne appeared to see this as a moral imperative:

Nowadays we are so accountable for test results, and I think that this emphasises the importance of us becoming curriculum makers. Yes, we want our children to make progress and to achieve well...but that does not mean that we have to deliver lessons which are uninspiring and focused only on teaching what children need to know for their assessments...it is our responsibility to interpret the national curriculum and transform it into meaningful lessons for our pupils.

Emily considered research by Martin (2012) which points to ‘the idea that children like to know they are making progress’. She judged that ‘most adults gain a sense of satisfaction from achieving something’ but admitted that she had not considered that ‘children felt the same way’. She also went on to draw implications for the classroom, reflecting on Biriotti’s (1999) writing which claims that pupils who make progress ‘are more likely to be engaged and enjoy the lessons more’. Emily appeared to retain this view as she undertook her school placement. When describing the children’s responses to her lessons, in which she had focussed particularly on developing their accuracy of pronunciation, she judged that the children felt they were making progress and, as a result, were engaged and keen to practice further:

[they] have since been showing off their skills to me when I pass them in the corridors! This seems to be of real interest to them, maybe because now they feel more confident speaking as they know they sound more French...it has captured their attention.

The importance of pupils making progress in their language learning re-emerged in trainee reflections throughout the course of both their Year 2 and Year 3 modules with a number of trainees considering the notion of progress in relation to ensuring their lessons provide sufficient challenge for the children. The trainees perceived challenge as a means of providing children with a ‘satisfying sense of accomplishment’ (Roxanne) and ‘achievement’ (Harriet) and appeared to use this term as an antidote to the less cognitively demanding foreign language lessons which research and their own observations in school indicate are more prevalent in the primary sector (Watzke, 2007; Cable *et al.*, 2010; Martin, 2012; Tinsley and Board, 2017).

In her description of a lesson she taught on school experience, Isla also exemplified the way in which she felt that she has challenged her pupils as a means of engaging them in their future learning:

I asked the class to put their hand up if they thought they could write a book in French, of course none of them put their hands up! This created a sense of excitement when I explained that by the end of the five weeks they would be doing just that.

In seminar discussions in which trainees attempted to define what is meant by “challenge”, the term ‘*constructive confusion*’ (Laura) was established. Laura considered this notion, proposing that this is achieved by planning activities which do not rely solely on memorisation or immediately result in success and for which children ‘*need to use a range of skills and thinking to be successful*’. She went on to suggest that:

by setting high expectations and allowing the children to be confused (whilst being supported by us)...we can be teaching the children the lesson of perseverance and effort and in doing so children get a far greater sense of achievement and self-belief.

Whilst the importance of challenging children cognitively was recognised by the trainees, many also sought to reconcile this with a need to ensure that children do not become ‘*disillusioned*’ in their learning or ‘*lose their self-confidence*’ (Joy) as a result. In this regard, providing a learning environment which supports risk taking, and values making mistakes as part of the learning process (Kirsch, 2008; Macaro 2014), was considered by many of the trainees as being a central aim of their teaching. Sophie reflected on a seminar discussion in which trainees questioned whether ‘*as teachers we try too hard to protect children from challenge and fear*’ and this led her to conclude that ‘*it’s important for us to create a learning environment in our classroom in which children aren’t afraid to “have a go”*’. Amelia also described her experience on school placement where she explained that ‘*I have done my best to create a supportive environment whereby no-one is judged and it is safe for the children to give everything a try*’. Children’s willingness to make mistakes was judged by Harriet as being a central tenet of successful language learning: ‘*children need to know that they are able to have a go and make mistakes, this does not make them any less of a linguist, it just makes them a brave one*’.

4.2.2 The place of writing and grammar in early foreign language learning

The view that many teachers do not recognise the value or importance of writing in the early stages of language learning (Hawkins, 1996; Tierney and Gallastegi, 2005) would appear to be borne out in the early reflections of this group of trainees. These misgivings seemed to stem from what they believed to be the primary goal of PFLs, namely *'to enable communication'* (Harriet). In particular these trainees questioned the extent to which writing would prove to be *'useful'* (Laura) should the children visit another country, suggesting that *'when we visit another country we speak in the target language more than we would necessarily write it'* (Emily). As the module progressed, however, some trainees experienced a shift in their thinking. Laura, for example, admitted that *'at the beginning of last session I felt fairly secure in my understanding that writing should be introduced later. But now I am wondering if it should be introduced from the word go'*. Harriet also recognised that prior to her seminars she had not *'given much consideration to how or even if writing or grammar was taught in primary schools but this has made me think'*.

For some of this group writing was seen as a vehicle through which pupils are able to experience *'a sense of accomplishment'* and progress in their learning (Becky) and which contributes to their feelings of *'pride'* in their own success and progress (Roxanne). Trainees appeared unanimous in their agreement that written evidence of progress in learning will be *'far more valued'* (Amelia) by the children than oral work, particularly in terms of being able to demonstrate their achievements to others. In addition to simply providing a record of progress, however, some trainees considered more deeply the place of writing and the teaching of grammar as a means of supporting the process of language learning (Wolff, 2000; Manchón, 2014).

A few, for instance, began to see writing as having an important part to play in enabling children to make *'links between letter sounds and visual representations'* (Rachel) and reinforcing *'an understanding of word order'* (Holly), both of which are crucial for early language learners (Jones and Coffey, 2013). Isla also identified that when writing *'in a foreign language, grammar has more of a part to play...as things like verb endings and adjectival agreements are suddenly visible'*. Other trainees, drawing on work by Manchón (2014),

considered that writing provides pupils with the '*thinking time*' necessary to '*draw on memorised*' language in order to formulate and communicate their thinking, unlike the '*immediate response*' required of oral-based work (Rachel). Laura argued that this provides a potential opportunity for children to take ownership of their learning, enabling their responses to be less formulaic:

By planning for writing tasks, we are providing children with time to think and formulate their responses. In doing so we are giving children the onus of their learning. If they have time to sit and think through answers they can potentially open themselves up to a range of vocabulary that can be accessed through dictionaries and textbooks which is just not possible when formulating sentences orally.

Although providing opportunities for children to write in the foreign language quickly became an important element of early language learning pedagogy for many trainees, the specifics about how this might be achieved, and in particular the teaching of grammar, appeared less obvious to them. One trainee recognised that her lack of practical experience, in that she hasn't '*really seen it taught*' (Emily), made it difficult for her to move beyond her broad understanding of the importance of grammar to the application of this principle to the classroom. Roxanne asserted her belief that, in order for children to be able to '*use language creatively and independently*', an understanding of '*basic, fundamental grammatical rules and structures...is vital*'. She then, however, appeared less able to articulate exactly how this might be coherently planned for, proposing only that grammar should be taught on a '*need to know basis*'. Harriet's reflections were equally nebulous, suggesting that grammar might be taught '*subliminally...where children don't realise they are learning*'. It is difficult to draw conclusions from these reflections about whether these trainees were adopting perspectives based on research that an overt focus on grammatical rules is inappropriate for young learners (Ytreberg, 1997), or whether their views stemmed instead from a lack of confidence and depth of understanding at this stage of their training of how to plan for and teach grammar.

Where a consensus did seem to be reached, however, is that the teaching of both writing and grammar needs to be '*engaging and enjoyable*' (Joy) for the children. Some of the trainees made reference to their own experience of learning a foreign language (mostly at secondary school) where grammar was taught as an abstraction from an immediate, communicative

purpose (Jones and Coffey, 2013; Hood and Tobutt, 2015). They associated this with '*tedious repetition of patterns*' (Rachel) and '*writing out long lists of examples and conjugating lists of verbs*' (Joy). The trainees concluded that '*grammar needs to be contextualised in order for it to be...relevant for the children*' (Roxanne) and therefore '*have the most impact*' (Amelia) on their ability to apply it. In this regard, Roxanne usefully drew on her learning from her English module:

We have considered in English seminars the importance of teaching English grammar creatively and within a context, as not only do the children need to understand the grammatical rules but they need to be able to apply them in their written work

There was, however, no other explicit reference made to literature and theory by the trainees as a means of exemplifying how they might combine a focus on the form and structure language with opportunities to apply this knowledge (Mitchell, 2014). This is despite the Jones and Coffey's (2013) '3Ps' sequence and Hood and Tobutt's '3 Ms' approach having been explored in seminars as a framework for doing so.

4.2.3 The importance of nurturing learner autonomy

The notion of learner autonomy was considered in seminars through an exploration of literature (Hurrell, 1999; Rubin *et al.*, 2007; Kirsch, 2012; Grenfell and Harris, 2014) as well as through activities which sought to exemplify this in practice. Autonomy in relation to early language learning was defined in trainees' patchwork reflections as: involving an element of children working independently; being '*active participants*' (Amelia); being afforded some freedom to control aspects of their own learning; and using language '*creatively*' in order that '*they can say what they would like to say*' (Isla). Two seminars in particular appeared to give rise to the trainees' consideration of the value of providing children with opportunities for independence and autonomy in their language learning. The first was a seminar which invited trainees to consider the place of writing as a means of supporting early language learning and the second comprised fieldwork which saw the trainees taking part in a "dérive".

Briefly, a *dérive* is described as a method of investigating a site without the use of specific or prescribed outcomes (often used by architects, artists and geographers) which stems from the

ideas and practices of the avant-garde artistic and political group known as the Situationists who were active in the 1950s and 60s. As Rice (2009:98) explains:

This 'transient passage' is where the *dérive* sets out on a journey with the intention of drifting from place to place with no predetermined idea of where they will go, or what they will find or experience. The exploration is in contrast to our normal movement through the city in which we normally travel purposefully between work and leisure activities. The key element to the *dérive* is the incorporation of play into its methodology.

The '*dérive*' fieldwork took place on the University campus and nearby city centre and the trainees' routes around these localities were randomly determined by a set of cards which provided directional instructions in a foreign language (e.g. *tournez à gauche*) and suggested activities (e.g. *trouvez un endroit tranquille*). As the cards were selected and followed by the trainees at appropriate intervals, their journeys were not predetermined by the tutor and their explorations of the locality therefore became unpredictable (Witt, 2013). Trainees were then invited to capture their journeys using a foreign language to record thoughts, observations, sounds and feelings.

The opportunity for trainees to engage in and reflect on learning outside the classroom in PFL in this way appeared particularly to stimulate some thinking and debate around the notion of learner autonomy. The data points to trainees judging in the first instance that such activities do have a place in providing memorable learning experiences where children are offered: *'more freedom to express the ideas which they think are important'* and which *'enable learners to become active participants in their learning instead of passive recipients of knowledge'* (Joy). The trainees also appeared to consider the development of language learning skills more broadly as a means of supporting pupil independence as they identified opportunities for children to *'draw on prior knowledge'* (Emily), to *'use dictionary skills'* (Amelia) and to engage *'creatively'* in their learning in order to *'work out'* (Harriet) new language in more open-ended contexts.

Trainees' reflections on pupil autonomy were, however, set against a backdrop of what a number of them defined as an outcomes-driven school culture and they were not alone in identifying this as a challenge. The pressures of performativity facing schools are recognised

widely in educational literature (Busher and Cremin, 2012; Priestley *et al.*, 2012; Buchanan, 2015), particularly in terms of the way in which this threatens teachers' professional agency and the enactment of their values in the classroom. The trainees in this study appeared to go further, however. Amelia described what she perceived as *'the constraints of targets and the curriculum'* and the extent to which such factors can threaten not only the teachers' agency but also the pupils' sense of autonomy in their learning. Harriet also recognised that teachers often tightly control pupil learning in that *'everything we do in the classroom we do because there is an objective and the children must meet that objective following a series of precise directions'*. She recognised therefore that there is a tension between allowing young learners the opportunity and time to take control of their own learning and ensuring that children make the *'rapid progress in every lesson'* expected by school leaders and, ultimately, Ofsted.

Therefore whilst the trainees were in accord in terms of the potential of fieldwork to both engage children and to provide them with the freedom necessary to use language in a meaningful and purposeful way (Watzke, 2007; Driscoll, 2015), they also appeared to be challenged by this sense of freedom and the idea of relinquishing some teacher control. Laura, for instance, began her reflections on her experience of the *dérive*, asserting that just because there is *'no minimum amount on a worksheet that needs to be finished by the end of the lesson'* does not mean that learning is not taking place. Later in her musings, however, she questioned whether fieldwork is actually *'a risk'* and whether there is *'a strong enough'* justification for undertaking such activities. Other trainees posed similar questions as they worried about the extent to which there might be *'enough relevant learning'* (Rachel) taking place and whether learning languages outside the classroom might be considered merely *'a jolly'* (Harriet).

Trainees appeared less unsettled, however, in their deliberations about the value of pupil autonomy in classroom-based learning. Planning opportunities for children to exercise some degree of independence in writing activities in particular was seen as contributing to a *'greater sense of achievement'* and pupil progress (Harriet). The challenges of supporting pupil independence in this context were recognised by trainees, particularly in view of the reality that young learners usually have limited language to draw on. As a result, Isla judged that there was a tendency for FL lessons to be very *'teacher-led'*. In subsequent reflections, however, trainees appeared to be able to reconcile these challenges more easily as they saw a

place for what they came to describe as ‘*structured freedom*’ (Eleanor). They provided practical examples within their reflections of supporting frameworks such as writing frames and word banks which teachers can ‘*slowly remove over time*’ as a means of enabling children to take control over their work and eventually ‘*achieve completely independent writing*’ (Isla). It is this gradual removal of scaffolds which a number of trainees considered to be a sign of pupils both exhibiting learner autonomy and a measure of ‘*how much progress they have made*’ (Harriet). The principles exemplified by these trainees are also advocated by authors such as Hurrell (1999), Rubin *et al.* (2007) and Kirsch (2012).

Deliberations on the notion of learner autonomy were not confined to post-seminar reflections but were also evident as trainees shared their experiences on their extended school placements. Within these patchwork reflections, there are examples of the way in which the value they placed on pupil independence was translated in different ways into their practice. Amelia, for example, provided an example of some spontaneous language use by a child who sought to explain in French that she had a sore thumb. Amelia admitted to not being able to recall the vocabulary for “thumb” so she ‘*made a point of looking it up in the dictionary and telling her later that day*’. At the end of her school placement, and in summation of her experience of teaching French, she presented this approach as being an integral part of her teaching:

Throughout this practice I have made a point of looking up vocabulary in my bilingual dictionary in order that children see it is ok not to know everything and to encourage the use of dictionaries as a valuable tool for increasing and checking our knowledge...this gives the children some ownership as they can formulate their own phrases rather than just tripping out the same ones as their peers.

Other examples include Emily’s description of her sequence of lessons which built towards the children ‘*creating their own book*’ and Roxanne’s account of how she explicitly explored with the children in her lessons the way in which some of the French phonemes are different to English. She explained to the other trainees in her post school experience reflection that she deemed this to be ‘*really important...it meant that the children could read the words to me independently with the correct pronunciation*’. There are also a number of examples of the way in which scaffolds were used to support pupil autonomy in their writing. Laura described the

way in which she used a writing frame to model creating a weather report in French, which the children then went on to use themselves with *'some achieving this quickly including connectives to extend their sentences'* and others asking *'for ways they could write more'*. Isla also depicted a lesson in which she provided her class with a writing frame to support their learning. In her post-lesson reflection she judged that *'the writing frame allowed the children to independently create their own accurate sentences in French, something that not many of them thought themselves capable of before the lesson'*. This, she reflected, contributed to the *'sense of achievement'* felt by the children.

In these examples autonomy was viewed by the trainees to encompass three central elements. Firstly, to be an autonomous learner, children need to possess the language learning tools necessary, (such as understanding how to use a bilingual dictionary or having an explicit understanding of the phonetic system of the language), to enable them to independently access the language they need to be able to communicate (Mitchell, 2014; Hood and Tobutt, 2015). Secondly, the term *'structured freedom'*, coined by the trainees, was advocated as a means of providing children with a scaffold to support and enable children to work independently of the teacher (Rubin *et al.*, 2007; Kirsch, 2012). Finally, learner autonomy was constructed as children being provided with an element of *choice* about what they write and produce in the foreign language in order that they might be presented with opportunities to communicate *'meanings that matter'* to them (Hawkins, 2005:7).

4.2.4 Providing a context for learning

The importance for trainees of providing what they described as a *'context'* for pupils' language learning began to emerge in their post seminar reflections. They made some attempt within these reflections to define what this term signifies for them although these explanations tended to be rather broad and non-specific in nature. Isla, for example, described context for learning as children having a *'real use for the language'* while Joy identified that it is the provision of *'real-life contexts' which makes language learning 'relevant for children'* (although what is meant by "real-life" is not defined explicitly). What did appear significant for the trainees in their consideration about learning contexts is that these contexts should be *'meaningful'* for the children (though, again, what is specifically meant by this was not explored in any precise way). The terms *'purposeful'* and *'meaningful'* also permeate literature

about early foreign language learning (Williams, 2001; Kirsch, 2012; Mitchell, 2014; Driscoll, 2015; Hood and Tobutt, 2015). Although, as is the case in the trainees' deliberations, these terms are often not defined in any precise way, they do appear to be consistently connected to the application of acquired foreign language knowledge and skills as well as to the learners having a clear understanding of the purpose of their learning (Little, 2003; Lamb, 2008).

Data elicited from trainees' reflections on their experience of teaching foreign languages in school does provide us, however, with exemplification and a better understanding of what they deemed a 'meaningful context' to mean. However it is clear that this term had been interpreted in diverging ways by some of the trainees. For some, providing a context for language learning appeared to be synonymous with adopting a cross-curricular approach. Indeed Harriet argued that by *'linking PFL back to the rest of the curriculum...children see it as an integrated part of their learning'*. It is this explicit connection of the children's foreign language learning with other aspects of their learning in school that was considered by both Isla and Amelia to be key to ensuring that learning is *'meaningful'* for the children and there are several examples in the data which illustrate the way in which the trainees had achieved this on their extended school placement.

Amelia, for example, described how she had developed her series of French lessons on the topic of 'Les Sports' as a way of linking their learning to the key event of 'Sport Relief' being celebrated in school and thus provide *'a meaningful context'* for learning. Roxanne also described her experience of teaching French to her infant class of children: *'My Year2 class have never learnt French before, so I decided to link my teaching to their current topic of "Commotion in the Ocean"'*. She judged that this experience *'emphasised'* for her the importance of teaching the language in a cross-curricular way and how coupling the language teaching with the children's topic work allowed for an opportunity to regularly revise and reinforce the language being taught:

One of the children picked up a dolphin from the role play area and I asked the children how to say dolphin in French. I was really impressed that quite a few of them remembered...I also used it when we went on a school trip to the aquarium.

The commitment of one trainee in enacting her belief about PFLs in this regard was demonstrated as Holly explained in some depth the challenges and successes she had faced as she sought to link her French lessons to the children's World War 2 topic:

Initially I was slightly apprehensive about teaching these lessons as I was really struggling to make connections, particularly as the children had no previous experience of French but I knew that it would be beneficial if I could link it to their topic.

She went on to describe how, 'after much consideration', she developed a role play scenario which involved the children pretending to be 'soldiers parachuted into France in order to help with the French Resistance'. Holly created a 'Parachute Regiment Basic Language Training booklet for each of the children that included a checklist of the language they were going to be covering' and she provided a summary of one of her lessons:

After practising the language, I took the children outside and they marched like soldiers in two lines. They stood facing their partner and then had an opportunity to practice the language they had learned. We repeated this several times with one of the lines moving along so that they had the opportunity to practice...with a variety of partners....It was lovely to see how passionate the children were and how much they enjoyed the session.

The examples here appear to demonstrate the way in which the trainees deemed other curriculum subjects and/or topics as having the potential to be valuable vehicles through which the foreign language can be taught and, more importantly, used by the children (Mitchell, 2014). The trainees' desire to provide a context for pupils' language learning was often exemplified in their descriptions of the lessons they had planned and taught in school. Interestingly, however, their lessons also appeared to be driven by the teaching and subsequent practice of tightly controlled, predetermined vocabulary and set phrases, a pedagogical approach which many of the trainees had identified in earlier reflections as being a barrier to pupil engagement (Hood and Tobutt, 2015). Although a number of the trainees had also previously raised the importance of supporting learner autonomy in foreign language lessons, this was also notably absent in their examples of practice.

In addition to considering a cross-curricular approach as a means of providing a context for language learning, other trainees reflected on a module seminar which explored the extent to which reading and writing stories are able to support early language learning. In response to this seminar Roxanne, for example, began to identify and articulate not only the value of using a story *'as a basis for a unit of work'* and as another means of *'contextualising the language'* but also as a means of exposing children to rich language (Brown, 2001; Watzke, 2007) and ensuring that they go beyond merely learning *'repetitive lists of nouns'*. This view was supported, and further developed, by Amelia who considered that stories have the potential to provide a basis for exploring *'the structure, language and rhythm in the text, including the grammar'*.

The potential of stories to provide a context for learning as opposed to teaching language in isolation and as an abstraction from meaning (Hood and Tobutt, 2015) was exemplified by Isla as she described her experience of planning and teaching the topic *'Qui Voyage?'* whilst on her subsequent school experience. The stimulus for this work was the children's topic on transport and she explained how she created her own storybook in French as a means of introducing the written form of the vocabulary she had been teaching to her young Year 1 learners. She described how *'the use of a book gave the introduction of the written word a real context for the children, as opposed to just seeing the words written on their own on the board'*. She also described how her storybook was used as a model and scaffold to support an element of learner autonomy (Kirsch, 2012) whereby children were provided with *'the choice of which type of transport they wanted to write about'* when creating their collaborative class book.

While some trainees viewed cross-curricular teaching and the use of stories as central constituents to providing a context for learning, other trainees appeared to view planning an *'end product'* (Emily), or final outcome, for the children's language lessons as a means of contextualising their learning. In particular, the notion of working towards an end of unit outcome was considered to be important as this, Emily asserted, provides the children with *'a reason as to why we are teaching them the specific vocabulary and how they will use it at the end of the series of lessons'*. Thus, learners have a clear understanding of the purpose of their learning which Little (2003) and Lamb (2008) stress is necessary in order that children are able to take an active and increasingly independent role in their language learning.

The idea of working towards a final piece of work or event where children apply their prior learning was exemplified in Lauren's description of an end of topic activity she had planned for the children whilst on her school placement. Over the course of a sequence of French lessons, Lauren taught her class language associated with weather. She used writing frames to scaffold and support their progress from word to sentence level and the final lesson was an opportunity for the children to film their own weather reports. Lauren explained how she provided a number of props such as *'suit jackets, 3D glasses and ties'* and how she *'split them into groups of four, where two were news anchors and the other two were the weather reporters'*. The children were then tasked with scripting, rehearsing and then filming their weather reports, drawing on the language from their previous lessons. This description of Lauren's practice exemplifies the extent to which she considered providing a context for learning and opportunities for learner autonomy to be important and was able to apply these principles in practice in her classroom.

Although the trainees appeared to have interpreted the notion of 'context for learning' in differing ways, what was consistently apparent was their view that situating the children's language learning within a context, where the reason and purpose for the learning is clearly communicated: be that in adopting a cross-curricular approach; through the use of stories; or in planning an end of unit outcome, contributes to enhanced pupil engagement and motivation (Williams, 2001; Kirsch, 2012). Laura, in a post seminar reflection for example, suggested that *'if children can see that there is a relationship between the stimulus and the activities we plan...then surely they are more likely to engage?'*. The value of working in this way was reinforced for her in school as she judged that the children she was working with were *'highly motivated'* and *'really loved the experience'* of producing their weather reports. Isla also commented in her reflections that *'the children were incredibly pleased with the class book'* and their ability to succeed in doing this *'created a sense of excitement'* in the class.

4.2.5 The importance of ensuring pupil engagement in foreign language lessons

The responses of pupils to the trainee teachers' lessons in school were frequently noted and appear as a recurring theme in their patchwork reflections. Post lesson reflections abounded, in particular, with examples where trainees commented on *'the level of enthusiasm'* (Harriet)

displayed by the children and the way in which they *'managed to get them [the children] really excited about their lessons'* (Emily). These reflections are indicative of the extent to which pupil engagement became of central importance for this group of pre-service teachers. This data, to some extent, parallels findings from other studies which identify that primary teachers are largely focused on ensuring that pupils enjoy their language learning experiences (Driscoll, 1999; Watzke, 2007; Cable *et al.*, 2010; Martin, 2012).

At the beginning of her school placement, and in response to the children's initial suspicions and negativity towards their French lessons, Harriet, for example, expressed her desire to demonstrate to the children in her class *'that French is really good fun'*. The description Laura shared of her initial experience of teaching French to her class also appeared to reveal her commitment to ensuring learner motivation:

Before I even began the lesson, the children saw that French was on the timetable and I was faced with a class of groans and moans and "oh no, not French, I hate French". I assured them that I was going to convert them into French fans by the end of the lesson...The emphasis was on the spoken word, using funny voices to build confidence and knowledge and to rebuild a love of French again. This approach seems to have worked and for the remainder of the week the children persistently asked me when their next French lesson would be! Hooray!

Being faced with initial negativity from the children appeared to motivate both trainees to change pupil perceptions and to foster in their pupils a love of language learning. It would, therefore, seem that their experience acted as a catalyst for both the development and deliberate enactment of their beliefs.

The data also, however, seemed to point to the way in which positive pupil responses and high levels of learner engagement appeared to validate the trainees' work and became a vital criterion by which some of the group felt able to judge the success of their lessons:

'I'm really happy with how this activity went and the amount of children that engaged with this activity' (Becky).

'It is very gratifying to see how their confidence has grown.' (Amelia)

'The enthusiasm remained high, with comments from the children about how they had enjoyed the lesson and were looking forward to continuing next week.' (Isla)

'Once again the children were very keen to show off to me what they had learned after the lesson.' (Holly)

'They have told me that they would like to have French every day.' (Amelia)

In addition to learner motivation acting as the measure of a successful lesson, a few trainees commented on the extent to which the enjoyment of their pupils also supported the development of their confidence in their own ability to teach languages. Holly, for instance, considered that *'It was really rewarding to see how much they enjoyed the sessions...and how keen they were to learn more! I was very nervous about teaching language lessons but this has really improved my confidence'*. Similarly Rachel described how the parent of one child in her class approached her *'to say how much her child enjoyed'* her lesson. Rachel expressed that this positive feedback enabled her *'to feel more confident'* about her teaching. Short (1994) suggests that this growth in self-esteem arises when teachers perceive that they are influencing something worthwhile. Striving to ensure that children enjoyed their language learning therefore impacted positively on the trainees' own sense of self-confidence as developing teachers of PFLs.

4.2.6 Concluding thoughts on trainees' beliefs about good PFL practice

With regards to the developing beliefs about effective PFL teaching and learning for this group of trainees, a number of generally agreed principles have been revealed. Firstly, ensuring that pedagogy moves children beyond an exclusive focus on oracy and vocabulary based memorisation of language was quickly established in their reflections as being deemed fundamental to ensuring children achieve success in their language learning (Hunt, 2009; Jones and Coffey, 2013). Writing and an understanding of grammar were therefore considered to have an important place in early language learning lessons as a means of supporting pupil achievement (Wolff, 2000; Kirsch, 2008; Manchón, 2014). Secondly, through their seminar reflections, the trainees also began to explore the importance of learner autonomy, defining this as children being afforded opportunities to apply language with increasing independence and creativity, as well as having the choice to communicate what is deemed personally

significant (Hawkins, 2005; Watzke, 2007; Driscoll, 2015). The trainees' reflections provided evidence of an understanding that learner autonomy requires a balance of known language and skills with carefully planned and supported lessons where scaffolds are removed over time to encourage learner independence (Hurrell, 1999; Rubin *et al.*, 2007; Kirsch, 2012). A final, theme emerging from the data was the importance the trainees placed on providing a context for pupil learning where lessons comprised opportunities to acquire and apply knowledge and skills for practical purposes which are clearly understood by the learner (Williams, 2001; Lamb, 2008).

Whilst, for the most part, the trainees were united in viewing these pedagogic principles as underpinning effective PFL practice, their reflections varied in the extent to which they were able to move beyond generalised theoretical knowledge to the specific exemplification of how that knowledge might be applied to the classroom (Mitchell, 2000; Larsen-Freeman, 2013). What is perhaps even more notable is that, for some trainees, their examples of practice on school experience demonstrated a clear incongruence with some of the approaches they had espoused as being of importance to them.

What was apparent in the trainees' responses to both the more theoretical aspects of their learning and their exemplification of their own practice, was that they were committed to ensuring that pupils enjoyed their language lessons. This echoes findings from a number of studies which highlight that for the majority of teachers pupil enjoyment is of central importance (Driscoll, 1999; Watzke, 2007; Cable *et al.*, 2010; Martin, 2012). Pupil engagement can therefore be seen as the 'golden thread' running through all of the trainees' reflections.

4.3 What factors do trainees articulate as being enabling or disabling to the development and enactment of their beliefs for PFLs in the classroom?

A principal aim of this study was to evaluate the factors that trainee teachers believe can support or limit their potential to realise their beliefs about PFLs in practice (Research Aim 1). Through the process of analysing the trainees' reflections, it became clear that, in addition to their taught specialism seminars, their experience in school in relation to PFL was also

significant in both empowering and disempowering trainees. In this regard two key issues emerged:

- The enactment of possibilities in practice
- The status of PFLs in schools

4.3.1 Observing and enacting possibilities in practice

One of the recurring challenges which emerged during the course of the module was the trainees' limited, and in many cases complete lack of, prior experience of observing foreign language teaching in a primary context. The low profile of FLs generally in the primary sector (Tinsley and Board, 2017), compounded by the shortage of primary teachers with foreign language expertise, has resulted in few practitioners who are able to provide good role models of practice for the trainees (Macrory and McLachlan, 2009). Consequently, whilst there is clear evidence of trainees drawing on literature, seminar content, and discussion as a means of developing their thinking and ideas about what constitutes effective early foreign language learning, there are also instances in their reflections where they recognised a limitation in their understanding as a result of being unable to connect theoretical perspectives in meaningful ways to practice in the classroom (Putnam and Borko, 2000). Becky, for example, considered her emerging understanding of the place of writing as a means of supporting foreign language learning. In her reflections it is clear that her engagement with literature had influenced her belief in the importance of writing. However these reflections betray some doubts as she acknowledged that her views were merely theoretical:

I definitely think there needs to be a greater emphasis on writing in the classroom as I feel this may be a way of improving children's attitudes towards language lessons as they will feel a great sense of accomplishment if they are able to produce a piece of writing in another language. Although I cannot be sure that this will work, I definitely believe that the writing aspect of language learning needs to be included more.

Becky returned to the notion of writing in her patchwork reflections later in the module, as she questioned at what age writing in a foreign language is best introduced to children: '*Personally I am unsure as to when the optimum age is to include writing in PFL lessons but I feel that when we have our own class this will become more evident and I will feel more confident*'. Here she appeared to place a high value on future classroom experience as a means of developing her practical knowledge and thus bolstering her confidence in this area (Soini *et al.*, 2015).

Another trainee, Emily, also expressed difficulty in engaging fully in a post seminar debate regarding the teaching of grammar, reflecting that *'how it is taught is a difficult topic to discuss as there are many views on it and I haven't really seen it being taught'*. She recognised that literature provides a variety of perspectives on this issue but she was unable to come to any firm conclusions on her own view about grammar teaching as she had no direct classroom experience to draw on.

Within the data there are numerous occasions where trainees explicitly recognised the absence of their own high quality practical knowledge. They conveyed a desire to observe 'good examples' (Amelia) of foreign language teaching and to be given the opportunity to teach it on their placements. They recognised, however, that this was by no means a given:

'I look forward to my next school experience in the hope of seeing the new PFL curriculum in action.' (Amelia)

'I wonder...will I be able to put into practice the different teaching strategies we have looked at this semester in seminars and on which our readings...have been based?'
(Sophie)

In all of the extracts cited thus far in this section, the trainees appeared to view opportunities to observe experienced practitioners and to try out pedagogic approaches for themselves as necessary conditions for the development of their learning (Kane, 2007). It is argued that this is indeed important if beginning teachers are to develop 'situated methodologies' (Ur, 2013:474) where research-based pedagogic principles acquired at University can be grounded in the real world of classroom practice (Markee, 1997).

Where trainees were able to draw on observations of practice to inform their reflections of issues raised in the module, however, these observations often portray the antithesis of the view they were proposing as being good practice rather than as a means of exemplifying their vision. For instance, in her consideration of the importance of providing regular, high quality language learning experiences for children, Becky made reference to her prior experience in one school where she judged that there was only *'a minute focus on languages and the lessons that did happen generally involved watching Power Point presentations from IT programmes to learn new vocabulary followed by completing worksheets'*. This experience is not deemed to be

unusual. In fact, the tension which existed between the ambitions of the trainee teachers and the realities of their classroom contexts is identified in the literature as being a common challenge (Nespor, 1987; Loughran, 2007; Menter *et al.*, 2012).

The reflections written by the trainees who were provided with the opportunity to teach a foreign language on their second year school placement appear, however, to be more positive in nature. Most notably these trainees commented on valuing the opportunity to apply the strategies they explored in seminars to the classroom and recognised the impact on their own learning of experiencing first-hand the pupils' responses to these strategies. Roxanne, for instance, considered the influence of her teaching on the children's ability to read in French:

I have enjoyed trying out some of the techniques we have mentioned in seminars, most notably the idea of linking the written word to phonics...we explicitly discussed how the French phonics are different. I think that this was really important – it is not necessarily something that I would have thought about prior to starting our specialism, but I can see now how important it is to discuss these differences. It meant that the children could read the words with correct pronunciation.

Although she recognised that her understanding of the importance of explicit phonics teaching began in seminars, it was the opportunity to witness first-hand the impact of this on children's learning which truly reinforced her view that this is an important element of early foreign language pedagogy. Emily also identified how one of her French lessons '*really emphasised...the importance of providing an end product*' as a means of engaging the children in their learning and ensuring learner progression in that '*their learning builds up to that*'. Emily's views, expressed in her patchwork reflections, that children are more likely to see a purpose for their learning if this is building towards something, were strengthened as a result of her classroom experience. It is evident in these examples how in being able to connect theory with classroom practice, these trainees were able to develop 'powerful images' of effective teaching (Feiman-Nemser, 2001:1017).

Overall the trainees who were provided with the opportunity to teach a foreign language whilst on school placement were unanimous in their agreement that this was a powerful learning experience for them with one trainee commenting; '*I have found this experience invaluable and although it was challenging, I have found it very rewarding*' (Emily). In

particular the trainees reflected on the development of their pedagogic skills in relation to planning and consequently their increased confidence:

'I have loved every minute of my French teaching and cannot wait for my next practice, armed with more ideas to try.' (Amelia)

'I have learned so much on this placement, and have gone from not teaching a single French lesson to confidently teaching a sequence.' (Laura)

It is clear from the data that the trainees who were able to engage in some language teaching on school placement and apply pedagogic approaches considered during their module to the classroom, even where this was on a more ad-hoc basis, valued this opportunity considerably and experienced a growth in confidence as a result. This opportunity to experiment and innovate, suggest Soini *et al.* (2015), enables pre-service teachers to perceive themselves more strongly as pedagogic experts with the capacity to realise their goals. There was also a clear recognition of the powerful way in which the trainees' school experience was able to reinforce their thinking and learning from their module. Thus, the conclusion can perhaps be drawn that the formation and expression of a philosophy of good practice is important but equally so is the subsequent enactment of these beliefs in the classroom (Bronkhorst *et al.*, 2011). It is worth noting, however, that there was not a parity of experience for all of the PFL special subject trainees with several of them not having had the opportunity to either teach or observe practice in school at all. In many cases the trainees attributed this lack of equity of experience, which arguably placed some at a disadvantage in terms of the development of their learning, to the perceived low status of the subject in primary schools.

4.3.2 The status of PFLs

At the outset of their second year school placement, the majority of the PFL specialist group perceived languages to be an integral part of their placement schools' curriculum and many of the trainees expressed optimism that they would be in a position to apply some of their learning from their seminars to their practice. Indeed, trainee patchwork reflections provide evidence that eight out of twelve of this group were presented with the opportunity to teach a foreign language at least to some degree during this placement. However, within the first few weeks, the reflections overwhelmingly began to paint a less promising picture with regards to

the importance schools were placing on this aspect of the curriculum in reality. The trainee teachers soon appeared to recognise the wide range of conflicting demands being placed on curriculum time with *'a number of other elements taking priority'* (Harriet) over the teaching of languages. This, the trainees asserted, resulted in the teachers, and subsequently the trainees themselves, having to *'fit languages in where there was time'* (Holly) or *'when there was nothing else that needed to be done'* (Harriet). In a number of cases trainees described PFL getting *'pushed off the timetable'* (Laura) altogether. Their experiences in school would seem to reflect the national picture for PFLs as borne out in recent research where teachers are reported to regularly abandon their FL lessons in order to meet the many other demands on their time (Cable *et al.*, 2010; Martin, 2012; Tinsley and Board, 2017).

The data reveals that the low status of PFL in their schools was perceived, at least in the early stages of some of the trainees' placement reflections, as being a positive factor in relation to their own development. They suggested that it is precisely because PFLs was not deemed to be of any great importance that this enabled them to take ownership of the planning and teaching of this aspect of the curriculum. Emily, for instance, explained how she was told that her Year 5 class *'had briefly studied French in the previous year but had since done nothing'*. As a result, the Head of Year 5 was *'more than happy' to let her have a 'free reign over the children's French teaching'*. Harriet's experience with her Year 4 class seemed to mirror this as she described how *'so far the children have a very limited background in French, with only a few topics covered briefly so I was told I was able to teach whichever topics I would like'*. Harriet considered that this had offered her *'a lot of freedom'* both in terms of the content of her lessons as well as in her pedagogic approach. The very fact that foreign languages were not considered a priority appeared to strengthen the sense of autonomy of these trainees. For Laura in particular, this sense of autonomy seemed to act as a catalyst for action (Eteläpeltö *et al.*, 2013), strengthening her resolve and commitment to ensuring the children in her placement school had access to a positive language learning experience *'even if'*, she asserted, *'it is just in my classroom'*.

Whilst the lack of importance placed on languages in schools appeared to have been considered by some trainees as a supporting factor to the development of their pedagogic skills and understanding and their ability to enact their beliefs about effective PFLs in the classroom, for others it acted as a barrier to this. Holly, for example, explained how the

children's language lessons for the whole of the spring term *'were being replaced by going swimming'* which resulted in her having to teach French on a much more ad-hoc basis and where time allowed. What was particularly apparent is that the trainees who, in the early stages of their school placement, identified a sense of *'freedom'* and autonomy over teaching a foreign language to the children, soon found that they, too, had to contend with managing the demands of an over-crowded curriculum. Emily, for example, described how *'unfortunately due to the timetable this week I was only able to teach a 25 minute lesson to both Year 5 classes and so very little could be covered once the children had managed to settle down'*. Likewise, Harriet quickly found that she *'ended up fitting odd bits of the lesson around other activities going on in the afternoons'*. Even Laura, despite her professed commitment at the outset of her school placement to ensuring that she taught her class languages, described, a mere two weeks later, how due to a *'busy couple of weeks, there has not been any opportunity to teach any French'*. Their experiences seemed to exemplify the 'situational agency' described by Higgins and Leat (2001) who argue that although an individual may possess the intent and capacity to act in accordance with their own beliefs, they are, in fact, heavily influenced by the professional contexts in which they find themselves (Biesta and Tedder, 2007).

The view that foreign languages were viewed as less of a priority than other areas of the curriculum was noted not only at individual classroom level, but also at a whole school level in some cases. Laura, for example, described how PFL did not feature at her school's INSET training where staff were discussing the changes to the new curriculum:

Subject leaders each discussed the new changes and the implications for the school. I sent the PFL / PAC [Philosophy for Children] leader an email to offer any help or input into her bit but I was soon informed that PFL was the only subject that wasn't being discussed during the INSET. I'm sure you will understand my disappointment with this and I had to restrain myself from shouting "BONJOURRR, what about languages?! One of the biggest changes in the curriculum and it doesn't even get a mention!" So disappointing to see it isn't a priority.

Sophie also reflected on her attendance at a whole school INSET day which similarly was focused on exploring the content of the new Primary curriculum. Although PFLs were discussed and *'a handout which summarised all of the changes'* was handed out to staff, she admitted that *'these changes were delivered by the English subject leader who seemed unclear on quite a few points'*.

In a few cases PFLs did appear as a regular subject on the children's weekly timetable; however, this was often where the foreign language was being taught by a specialist language teacher or by another teacher or teaching assistant in order to provide planning, preparation and assessment (PPA) time for the class teacher. This, then, presented an additional hurdle for the trainee teachers as they were required to be involved in planning meetings with their class teacher and were consequently unable to either observe or teach the language lessons. This was exemplified by Sophie as she stated in her patchwork reflection that *'unfortunately I have not had the chance to teach French since I am unable to change my PPA on a Wednesday afternoon which is when French is taught'*.

The very fact that PFL is perceived as a low status subject (Cable *et al.*, 2010; Martin, 2012; Tinsley and Board, 2017) could perhaps be viewed as providing valuable learning opportunities for beginning teachers. One could argue, for example, that PFL is an area that trainees on placement are quickly able to take full ownership of in terms of both the planning and teaching, because class teachers appear more than happy to relinquish this area of the curriculum to them. Certainly, it would appear from the experience of the majority of this group of trainees that pupil progress in PFLs was deemed to be much less of a priority in that children's exposure to the language had been very limited in many cases. Thus, the trainee teachers were afforded with important opportunities to experiment with new pedagogic strategies and approaches in a lower-stakes environment.

The lack of importance often attributed to PFL would, however, equally appear to present a barrier to the development of beginning teachers in that it often gets replaced on the timetable as other demands take priority; as is borne out in the trainee teacher Patchwork reflections. This creates a challenge for teacher educators in ensuring that trainee teachers have regular opportunities to observe practice as well as plan and teach foreign languages and to enable them to trial strategies in the classroom. As has already been explored earlier in this section, the impact of such experiences on beginning teachers is, perhaps, significant.

4.4 Chapter Summary

In conclusion, analysis of the trainees' patchwork reflections sought to explore the developing conceptualisation and articulation of their beliefs about good PFL teaching and learning and the factors which they deemed to both support and inhibit the development and enactment of those beliefs. Analysis of the data revealed learner engagement as having been a central preoccupation for this group of pre-service teachers. Their understanding of how this could be achieved pointed to a pedagogic approach underpinned by a commitment to pupil progress. Specifically, opportunities to write in the FL and possessing a basic grammatical knowledge were perceived as essential in enabling children to use language flexibly and with increasing independence (Wolff, 2000; Brown, 2001; Watzke, 2007; Kirsch, 2008; Manchón, 2014).

Through their reflections, the trainees identified an engagement with theory and literature as well as having regular, planned opportunities for reflection and collaborative discussion as being central to supporting the development, and in some cases transformation, of their beliefs about effective PFL pedagogy and their ability to articulate these (Ellis, 1997; Busch, 2010; Larsen-Freeman, 2013). Theoretical knowledge alone, though, was judged as not being sufficient. Examples where trainees had the occasion to observe and teach a FL in school illustrated the impact such opportunities had on their development. Specifically these experiences served to synthesise and reinforce their university-based learning as well as to strengthen their pedagogic confidence. By contrast, working in school contexts where other demands were regularly prioritised over the teaching of FLs was judged by the trainees as considerably limiting the opportunities they had to observe practice and to translate theoretical principles into practice, despite their professed intentions to do so.

CHAPTER 5 – TRAINEE NARRATIVES

The way in which the trainee participants in this study conceptualised and articulated their beliefs and understandings about good PFL practice, and the influence of the specialism modules on their learning (Research Aim 1), were critically explored in Chapter 4. It is acknowledged that these beliefs were tied to the specific context of their university-based training. This social context, with the exception of their school placements, was consistent for all of the trainees.

In addition to these aims, this research also sought to explore how the trainees' beliefs evolved and changed as they entered the profession (Research Aim 2) and to analyse the extent to which their classroom practice was congruent with these professed beliefs (Research Aim 3). The themes identified as being important to the trainees as a collective group in Chapter 4 are therefore returned to and considered in this chapter in relation to the particularities of the individual narratives of three of the trainees as they embarked on their first year as newly qualified teachers. In doing so it is possible to examine the extent to which these themes remained important over time and in relation to their changing social contexts and experiences.

In this chapter the narratives of three trainees, Isla, Holly, and Eleanor, are presented. These trainees were chosen as they represented three contrasting stories, particularly in relation to their experiences in school as newly qualified teachers and the influence their school contexts appeared to have on their beliefs about PFLs and the extent to which they enacted these beliefs in the classroom. A 'narrative analysis' (Squire *et al.*, 2014:7) approach, which seeks to maintain the coherence of each narrative, has been adopted as an alternative to the more thematic, category-centred paradigm afforded by the 'analysis of narrative' method applied in Chapter 4. For each trainee, data from their Patchwork reflections and the subsequent two interviews have been presented as narrative monologues in three separate 'episodes' as a means of safeguarding the integrity of the narratives and capturing their whole stories (Moen, 2006).

The **first episode** of each trainee's narrative took place over the course of the second and third years of their teacher training course. Data is drawn primarily from the patchwork reflections they posted in response to their second Year PFL specialism module and their second school placement which followed this module. The trainees were also invited to contribute a final patchwork reflection in response to their third year PFL specialism module. The **second episode** of the trainees' narratives is drawn from individual interviews which took place in their third year, post their final extended school placement and within a few weeks of the completion of their teacher training course. The **third and final episode** draws on data from the final set of individual interviews with the three trainees which occurred towards the end of their NQT year. These episodes are presented within text boxes.

Greimas' actantial analysis is applied to the trainees' narratives and presented alongside the narrative in synchronous form in order that the actantial roles evident within each narrative section are revealed and examined. These actants, which form the integral structural element upon which the narratives revolve, and the stages (or 'passes') involved in this approach to semiotic analysis, were explored in more depth in Chapter 3 of this study. By means of summary, however, the **subject** 'carries out the central role in the narrative' and the **object** is 'the goal towards which the subject's actions...are directed' (Fiol, 1990:381). The **sender** is the actant that motivates the trainee to seek her object of desire and the **receiver** is the perceived beneficiary of the successful achievement of the object. The final pair of opposing binary actants is the **helper**, the force acting to assist the subject in their quest for the object, and the **opponent** which represents the force which seeks to hinder the quest (Fiol, 1990:381). Bold type has been used throughout this chapter to support the reader in identifying more easily the actants within the commentary. It is important at this juncture to restate that the overarching aim of this study was to position the beginning teachers at the heart of the research à propos what they think and believe with regards to PFLs and how they interpret the realities of their classroom practice (Louden, 1991; Moen, 2006). Thus, within the constructed narrative monologues the subject in each programme block is the trainee herself and consequently this actant remains consistent throughout the narratives.

The complete narratives for each of the three trainees and the corresponding detailed actantial analysis are presented in full in Appendix 3. Although this chapter presents selected extracts from the complete narrative for each trainee, the order in which these extracts

appear have not been altered in order to preserve the temporality of the narratives. This was deemed important in order to identify changes in the actantial roles as the narratives progressed and, thus, to develop an understanding of how the trainees' beliefs and practices were shaped over time and in response to their experiences and the contexts in which they found themselves.

5.1 Isla's Story

Isla was twenty-one years old when she embarked on her first PFL specialist subject module. Her formal language qualifications consist of an 'A*' for her GCSE French and a 'B' in her A Level French. She also studied Italian at school but did not pursue this into her GCSE year.

5.1.1 Episode 1

Isla's narrative begins with her response to the first seminar of her second year PFL specialism module. She reflects on the pedagogic aims she is aspiring to as a future teacher of PFLs (see Data Extract 5.1) and she draws on the reading from this seminar as a means of articulating the development of her thinking in this regard. In particular, Isla considers research which has identified that foreign language pedagogy in the primary sector is often characterised by disconnected, vocabulary-based lessons (Cable *et al.*, 2012). This, Enever and Watts (2009) judge, does little to engage or motivate children in the longer-term. This research creates emerges frequently as the **sending** actant throughout this first episode of Isla's narrative, motivating her desire to adopt an alternative pedagogic approach. In particular this early narrative section lays the foundations for the development of her thinking with respect to the importance of both pupil engagement and pupil progress (the **object** of her desire).

(TR4) After Tuesday's session, I found myself thinking mostly about what it is we're aiming for as primary FL teachers. Can we say we've taught a successful lesson if most children in the class can simply respond to pictures of animals with their French names? When lessons were vocabulary driven and consisted of learning a list of nouns, children were likely to forget most of what they had learnt in a short space of time. These kinds of lessons were also expressed by children as being something they disliked. Cable *et al.* (2012) found in Key Stage 2 language teaching, the emphasis was on producing 'memorised language items'....However, rote learning nouns does not allow for independently creating sentences and leaves very little scope for writing....

As Martin (2012) found, some children don't see French as something they can progress in. This is something I saw in school when teaching French to my year six class. As the class had not had much French teaching before, there was very little prior knowledge to work with and I had the class working at the same level.... It was clear just within the six lessons I taught them for there were individual children who needed more of a challenge and, had it been my own class I would have attempted more structured differentiation.

Data extract 5.1 Episode 1 Programme Block 1

It is clear that the focus of this first narrative section is on outcomes for the children and therefore the immediate beneficiary (**receiver**) of the object is the learners. This extract of Isla's story, however, also provides evidence of a growth in her pedagogical understanding and she is, therefore, judged as occupying the actantial role of **receiver** here. Being presented with opportunities to expound her beliefs and to develop a 'vision of a preferred future' (Fullen, 1993:3) is considered to be central to her ability to enact this vision in her future practice (Rowland, 2000). Thus, the more theoretical aspects of her module seminar, in particular her reading and her engagement in the patchwork reflection, acts as a catalyst for deeper learning (Ovens, 2003a). Her seminar is consequently identified as fulfilling the role of principal **helping** force as it has an important role to play in enabling her to successfully achieve her object of desire. However, the practice more commonly adopted in primary school, which appears to stand in juxtaposition to Isla's emerging beliefs about effective PFL pedagogy, acts as the **opponent** in this narrative. This potentially threatens the degree to which she is able to achieve her goal.

There are moments within Episode 1 of Isla's narrative where the object of her desire does, however, reveal a tension between her wish for pupils to enjoy their language learning and her belief in the importance of ensuring they make progress and achieve success. This tension

emerges early on. In Isla's second reflective patch, for example, as she continues to respond to the specialism module, learner engagement and progress appear to be perceived as dichotomy and Isla is seen to wrestle with the complexities this presents (see Data Extract 5.2).

Within this narrative extract she considers in some depth the place of literacy in the early language learning classroom. On the one hand, Isla identifies the potential challenges of teaching writing specifically due to the more '*visible*' nature of grammar (Jones and Coffey, 2013; Manchón, 2014) and the way in which this is then perceived as being '*difficult*' and '*less enjoyable*' (Driscoll, 2014). On the other hand, however, she recognises the important part writing and grammar have to play in supporting the development of early foreign language learning (Wolff, 2000; Leki, 2001; Manchón, 2014). The **object** of Isla's desire is therefore identified as seeking to reconcile two central aspects of her beliefs about effective PFLs teaching: the importance of teaching the technical elements of a FL as a means of supporting pupil autonomy and progress, and the importance of protecting the children's engagement and desire to learn the foreign language.

(TR5) I think it is highly important for children to have a lot of experience reading and writing in a foreign language as well as learning oral skills. Reading and writing in PFL teaching seem to come second to speaking and listening skills as they are seen as 'more difficult' or 'less enjoyable' (Skarbek, 1998). This may be because, when reading or writing in a foreign language, grammar has more of a part to play...things like verb endings and adjective agreement are suddenly visible.

Biriotti (1999) discussed the balance between accuracy and confidence that we as PFL teachers need to reach, stating that a complete disregard for accuracy means children have little basic understanding of the language whereas too much focus on accuracy does not inspire confidence in the children....

I found Skarbek's (1998) discussion of what the definition of writing is to be very thought provoking. We looked at writing frames in the seminar, and I have also used writing frames with year six children, most of whom created impressive written sentences in their books during the lessons. This relates back to the sense of accomplishment writing gives to children; the writing frame allowed the children to independently create their own accurate sentences in French, something not many of them thought themselves capable of doing before the lesson.

Data Extract 5.2 Episode 1 Programme Block 2

Isla's cognitive dissonance, stemming from aspects of her seminar, remains the **sending** function in this section of the narrative, motivating her to consider strategies for supporting children's language learning. Her module reading and patchwork reflections in particular continue to support the development of her thinking about effective PFL practice and thus remain fulfilling the **helping** actantial role. In addition, however, her direct experience in school can also be regarded as providing an additional helping force as it gives her the opportunity to personally interpret the formal, theoretical knowledge she has acquired through her reading (O'Hanlon, 2012). This fusion of theory and practice acts as a means of potentially overcoming the **opposing** tension which exists between language as a '*difficult*' set of rules and the need for children to engage with and to apply these rules in order to be able to communicate. In this early stage of her module, Isla continues to identify the children as the immediate **receivers** of the benefits of the achievement of the object. However, as she begins to articulate her emerging beliefs and the development of her thinking, Isla can also be judged as additional receiver.

It is as Isla embarks on her second block school experience, and the context for her reflections changes, that a notable shift in some of the actantial roles influencing her narrative becomes evident. Programme Block 4 (see Data Extract 5.3) marks the first of a series of Isla's reflections on her experience of teaching French to a mixed Reception / Year 1 class. Her initial observations reveal the current high levels of pupil enthusiasm for FL learning in her class. Whilst Isla's resolve to safeguard pupil enjoyment remains the primary **object** of her narrative, it is her current direct classroom experience which assumes the role of **sender**, usurping, at least for the time being, the influence her module is perceived to have on her practice.

(TR10) After finding out that enthusiasm levels around learning French were high in the class, I was keen to make the first lesson action packed and fast paced to maintain this attitude...

To introduce the topic, I outlined what the children would be creating by the end of the unit (a story book about a character called Michelle who was travelling to Paris). I brought 'Michelle' in to meet the children which they loved. I asked the class to put their hand up if they thought they could write a book in French, of course none of them put their hands up! This created a sense of excitement when I explained that by the end of the five weeks they would be doing just that.

I planned lots of different types of activities and the children enjoyed taking part in the tasks and games I had prepared. The enthusiasm remained high, with comments from the children about how they had enjoyed the lesson.... Despite this positive first lesson, on reflection I was dubious about how many of the children had actually achieved the learning objective and whether any of them had left the lesson having orally learnt the six pieces of vocab I had set out to teach... Therefore, for the next lesson, the number of words was halved to just three... This seemed like a very low number to me at the time and I was worried the children would get bored quickly of just three words....

Data Extract 5.3 Episode 1 Programme Block 4

With regards to the object of Isla's narrative, the conflict between learner engagement and progress is revealed once again. Analysis reveals that her developing pedagogic skills, which I infer as having arisen at least in part from her course, occupy the **helping** force in this narrative; however, Isla herself recognises that her preoccupation with learner engagement has led to lack of focus on their learning. Her practice at this stage of her training would therefore seem to closely parallel early foreign language pedagogy found more commonly across the primary sector (Driscoll, 2000; Cable *et al.*, 2010; Martin, 2012). There is, therefore, a discord between this programme block and the object of her desire in earlier sections of her narrative; in these she identified her belief in the importance of children making progress and achieving success in their language learning as a means of securing pupil engagement. Instead, once again, enjoyment and attainment stand in opposition.

Thus far in this first episode, the development of Isla's learning has explicitly been identified in her reflections and she has, therefore, been identified alongside the children as occupying the **receiving** actantial role. Now, as the context for Isla's reflection changes and she begins to apply her learning to the classroom, we see a shift in her narrative with the children becoming more emphatically placed in the role of primary beneficiaries. It would appear, therefore, that

the particular conditions and social context in which Isla finds herself are beginning to shape her narrative (Moen, 2006; Andrews *et al.*, 2013).

Data Extract 5.4 sees Isla reflecting on her second week in school in terms of the foreign language lesson she was able to teach. In the previous narrative section, the object of her desire was singularly related to the engagement of her pupils. The **object** of this section of Isla's narrative would appear, however, to be two-fold. Here she appears to recognise a need for pupils to be engaged but also for her, as their teacher, to have a clearer focus on learning with children (who remain the **receivers** of the benefit). Specifically, she identifies the need for the learners to acquire a secure grasp of the vocabulary and pronunciation in order that progress can be made. Consistent with the previous programme block, the **sending** actant is Isla's current experience in school and, in particular, her reflection on her previous lesson which identifies areas of her practice which can be improved. This is inferred from the references she makes to her own practice as she draws comparisons between her two lessons.

(TR11) The big focus of this week's lesson was keeping the children focused and moving them around the classroom as much as possible. This certainly helped with ...making sure they didn't get bored and lose interest with the activity.

The key change for this lesson was cutting the key vocabulary down from six words to three. Through observing the children's responses to the lesson, this reduction allowed the children to grasp the three words as the majority of the class were listening and responding accurately. I made sure to correct any mispronunciations from the very start, particularly making the silent d in 'à pied' a regularly mentioned point. Progress had been made over the course of the lesson as it was decided that it would not be wise to add the additional three words the following week ... and that it would be more constructive to focus on making sure the children could use the words in a sentence.

The plenary of this week's lesson, a whizzing game on the interactive whiteboard, proved very enjoyable to the children ... I also noted a difference in the children's responses to target language, with more than half the class responding correctly to 'écoutez' the first time and lots of children picking up on 'levez-vous' and 'répétez'...

Data Extract 5.4 Episode 1 Programme Block 5

The challenge of maintaining the children's focus and engagement was judged to be the primary **opponent** that had to be overcome within this narrative extract. Isla's behaviour management skills and pedagogic knowledge, presumably arising from her prior experience in

school and her taught module, provide the **helping** force enabling her to achieve her object on this occasion.

Over the course of her school placement, Isla's narrative reveals that the primary **object** of her desire has shifted away from pupil enjoyment alone and has instead becomes increasingly focused on the children's learning. Her narrative in response to her penultimate French lesson, for example, (see Data Extract 5.5) reveals her desire to support the children's transition from spoken to written communication. Although within this extract Isla comments on the children's levels of engagement, the primary rationale for her choice of teaching approach is centred on the impact she believes this will have on their learning.

(TR13) This week presented the biggest challenge as I was introducing writing the word to the children when not all of them had yet made the connection between the spoken and written word... In a normal classroom situation, I would have spent at least one more lesson on reading before starting writing, however due to the nature of the placement the children needed to begin writing in order to get their class book finished in time. The first thing I did...was to talk through which parts might be tricky to spell or remember, including the accent on the a in 'à pied'. We then worked on...writing in the air and on each other's backs, making a guessing game out of it which the children enjoyed a lot. The idea of these activities were to make it easier for the children to spell the words correctly when they were writing.

Data Extract 5.5 Episode 1 Programme Block 7

Although it would seem that Isla possesses faith in the children's capacity to achieve, and the pedagogic skill necessary to act according to her beliefs (the **helping** forces); the externally imposed time constraints of her school placement exert an **opposing** force on the pedagogic choices she makes and the extent to which she feels able to achieve her object. Isla recognises for the first time that she is not in complete control of her environment but rather is heavily influenced by it (Biesta and Tedder, 2007) and thus she judges this lesson to be the most challenging to teach to her very young learners. Despite this perceived challenge, it would seem that Isla's beliefs about effective PFL pedagogy, which can be inferred from her earlier narrative to have stemmed from her module seminars and reading (see Data Extract 5.2 Programme Block 2), are influencing and shaping the approaches she employs in the classroom and thus continue to fulfil the **sending** actant.

The tension Isla has thus far perceived to exist between pupil engagement and pupil learning is no longer evident in her final school experience reflection (see Data Extract 5.6). Instead she appears to have come to understand pupil progress not as separate from but rather as a means of supporting engagement (Graham, 2014). This is exemplified through the analysis which reveals a shift in the actantial roles occupied by the act of children writing. As already identified, in the previous narrative extract supporting and enabling children to write in the foreign language was considered to be Isla's primary object. However, in this programme block, writing can be considered process, act and product (Kirsch, 2008). Writing thus fulfils the **helping** function.

(TR14) For the final lesson, the children knew they would be writing their book. We looked at 'Qui Voyage?' again first to explore the structure of the sentence we would be writing...When this was secure, the children moved back to their tables and had the choice of which type of transport they wanted to write about. ... They were told that their sentence would be checked before being written on a book page, which again took away the risk of writing it incorrectly on paper. After writing their sentence...we bound all the pages together with a front and back cover to create the final product.

Data Extract 5.6 Episode 1 Programme Block 8

As Isla embarks on her last specialism module in the third and final year of her course, she reflects explicitly on the development of her thinking in relation to PFLs over the course of her training (see Data Extract 5.7). Isla identifies that her principal **object** of desire, as far as her teaching of foreign languages is concerned, is to set higher expectations for the children's learning. Although her reflective narrative within this programme block takes place back within the context of her subject specialism module, it is interesting to note that analysis reveals that the perceived **receiver** of the benefit of the object of this narrative section does not shift back to herself as a learner within that community but remains as the children.

(TR15) When I initially chose to specialise in primary languages prior to starting the course, I barely had a vision for what PFL teaching should look like. I had very limited experience of primary languages and the little experience I had was a lesson I observed which consisted of a puppet based game, a song and sticking pictures onto a sheet. For this reason, and my limited understanding of the expectations for primary children, my vision for primary languages at this point was one of games, songs and a pure focus on the 'fun' aspect of teaching. Since then, my vision has changed a lot ...During the teaching sessions last year and my dissertation research, I have developed a vision of having higher expectations of children and of writing in primary foreign languages...

Data Extract 5.7 Episode 1 Programme Block 9

Within this section, Isla explicitly recognises a lack of opportunity in school to observe the kind of pedagogy to which she is now aspiring. Before embarking on her specialism, her experience of PFLs lessons was characterised instead by the less cognitively challenging '*games and songs*' approach also documented in recent research (Tinsley and Board, 2017). This, she believes, led to her holding a narrow view of FL teaching and a lack of aspiration for young learners of languages. This disconnect between theoretical perspectives on effective pedagogic practices and the actual experience of trainees in schools occupies the **opposing** force in this narrative section and is raised by Feiman-Nemser (2001) as being a considerable challenge for ITT programmes more generally. It could, however, be argued that this challenge is compounded in FLs by the shortage of teachers in the primary sector with particular language expertise and confidence (Cable *et al.*, 2012).

Despite an absence of opportunity to observe good practice, throughout Episode 1 of her narrative, Isla has provided a number of examples where she has been given the opportunity to connect and apply the more theoretical aspects of her learning to her own classroom practice. The narrative, therefore, places her experience on the course, which has provided her with opportunities to develop both her own philosophy for good PFL teaching and the knowledge and skills to begin to enact this (Feiman-Nemser, 2001), as the primary **helping** actant.

By way of concluding this first episode, until this point Isla's narrative has revealed that ensuring learners are engaged in their language learning is overwhelmingly the **object** of her desire in relation to her own PFL practice. What is striking, however, is the way in which her understanding of how to secure pupil engagement develops over time so that it is framed less in terms of games and fun but rather more in relation to pupils achieving success in their language learning. She attributes pupils feeling '*a sense of achievement*' (Programme Block 2) to teachers providing appropriate challenge for them which, she contends, includes learners being supported to write with some degree of independence and autonomy in the foreign language (Hawkins, 2005; Grenfell and Harris, 2014).

The motivating force (or **sending** actant) which dominates this episode is Isla's developing theoretical knowledge and emerging beliefs about PFL teaching and learning which she seems

to attribute in many regards to her engagement with her PFL Specialism module. The importance of future teachers developing a schema of theoretically framed beliefs as a means of shaping their future practice and the curriculum they offer their learners is supported by Gudmundsdottir (1990) and Lawes (2003). It is important, however, to recognise that Isla's beliefs are not expressed as merely disconnected, externally imposed theories. There are, instead, a number of examples in Isla's narrative which indicate that aspects of her experience in school have also served to strengthen, and indeed influence the development of, these beliefs. Thus, this stage of Isla's narrative, in which she appears to draw on her growing theoretical understanding and pedagogical knowledge as the primary **helping** functions, would seem to echo conclusions drawn by Brouwer and Korthagen (2005) who judge that it is the interweaving of scholarship and practical experience which contributes to the formation of beginning teachers' beliefs and practices. In juxtaposition, however, the lack of opportunity to observe experienced practitioners enact the pedagogic approaches she upholds as effective is identified as an **opponent** for her. Isla's experience would appear to embody Feiman-Nemser's (2001) warning of the difficulties faced by ITT programmes in guaranteeing such opportunities.

5.1.2 Episode 2

This second episode of Isla's narrative, taken from an interview with her after her final school experience and at the end of her degree, begins as she considers her experience in school to date. Her reflection returns initially to her second year school placement as she describes how the 'informal' status of PFL in the school context she found herself in contrasted sharply with the beliefs she developed about good practice at university (see Data Extract 5.8). Rather than this situation leading to Isla disconnecting from her ideals, as Kane (2007) cautions is often the case for trainee teachers, Isla perceived this as an opportunity to 'experiment' with teaching strategies and thus further develop her understanding of different pedagogical strategies and approaches (the **object** of this narrative section).

(TR2) My second year placement was in Year 6 ...That was a junior school as well and they did French but it was quite informal - the LSA ran the French lessons and just basically worked through a scheme of work sheets so while I was there they let me just sort of do whatever I wanted really and I took it as a really nice opportunity to just have a bit of an experiment, a bit of a play ...it was quite enjoyable just to be able to have a go.

Data Extract 5.8 Episode 2 Programme Block 1

The lack of value placed on PFLs in the school has afforded Isla with opportunities to experiment with her teaching approaches in a way which, perhaps, was not the case for other more high-stakes lessons. This lack of status therefore has the effect of **helping** agent towards Isla achieving her object of desire. Interestingly, however, the low status of PFL can equally be regarded as providing an **opposing** force as Isla is not able to observe the pedagogic approaches to which she aspires. This lack of opportunity and the barrier to learning this presents echoes the experience of many trainees in other studies (Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Macrory and McLachlan, 2009).

Isla's narrative then turns to her vision and aspirations for the future in relation to PFLs. This projective dimension of her narrative reveals Isla's imagining of new possibilities (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998; Oolbakkink-Marchand *et al.*, 2017) as she reflects on how she would like to see the status of PFL raised in schools in the future as her principal **object** of desire (see Data Extract 5.9). This is a notable change in relation to that which has been previously identified as her primary goal. In Episode 1, Isla's object of desire was more personal and was centred on her desire to teach foreign languages in a way that was congruent with her developing beliefs about good practice. Now Isla's desire has shifted to a need to effect change on a more pragmatic but whole-school level, and this appears to have been prompted by the low status associated with PFLs in the schools in which Isla has worked, coupled with her conviction that raising its profile is important (the **sending** actants).

(TR4) Thinking about what I would like to see for primary language in the future would be sort of it being seen as just another foundation subject and not a kind of big, scary, different thing that isn't as important or isn't as necessary.... And certainly for class teachers that it becomes just a given that they're going to be teaching a language as part of their day to day practice and ...it's not something that you have to have a specialist come in, in the same way that you don't have to have a specialist come in and teach your pupils geography. I'd really like that attitude to come across in schools....

(TR5) I think what makes the difference between seeing languages taught in some places but not in others is sort of the expectation of what those teachers need to be teaching. ..I think it's sort of a case of actually if teachers have to do it then they will, they'll be fine, they'll find a way...

(TR6) So in terms of how the lesson is taught and my vision for what effective primary language learning is, mostly I would say children seeing it as a really important part of their learning...

Data Extract 5.9 Episode 2 Programme Block 3

It is Isla's view that some teachers feel unable to teach a FL and that specialist teachers are required to fill this gap in expertise. It is this response from teachers, which research suggests stems from a lack of competence and confidence in FL skills and pedagogy (Barton *et al.*, 2009; Enever and Watts, 2009; Wade and Marshall, 2009), which Isla judges to be the primary threat (**opponent**). Consequently, Isla concludes that the successful attainment of her object of desire will be realised primarily in schools where teachers accept their role in teaching languages in the same way as they do for other curriculum subjects. This acceptance will, in her view, lead to teachers '*finding a way*'. This, therefore, becomes the **helping** function in this section of her narrative. Towards the end of this programme block it becomes clear that Isla perceives the children as being the primary beneficiaries (**receivers**) of the object. This is a shift in the narrative from herself as receiver of the benefits (as identified in Programme Blocks 1 and 2 in this episode) to the children. This dominates her narrative from this point forward.

Within the narrative, as Isla articulates what she considers to be effective PFL teaching, she returns to the place of writing and, in particular, the importance of children recognising their own achievements as a means of engaging them in their learning (Satchwell, 2006; Graham, 2014) (see Data Extract 5.10). With regards to this as her central **object** of desire for her PFL teaching, some congruence with Episode 1 is revealed. The **sending** actant motivating her to continue to seek this goal is explicitly identified as the knowledge and confidence Isla gained as a result of undertaking a school-based research project as an element of her taught course. This research appeared to provide Isla with a way of connecting in a meaningful way the theoretical knowledge and principles which framed her learning at university to her practice in the classroom (Cortazzi, 1993; Putnam and Borko, 2000). Isla goes on to describe how this had an important effect on the development of her thinking.

(TR10) I also think it's really important that children are writing in some way during their language learning... from the research that I did for my dissertation, it was quite a small scale project but that class really loved the writing that they were doing, they enjoyed it. They found that it gave them a purpose and also it was really nice because they all felt really pleased with themselves that they could do it. When I first ... said they were going to be doing some writing in French they all said "oh, we can't write, I can't do that..." and actually by the end they'd all produced three pieces of writing in French that was pretty much independent ... it was really nice to see them succeeding at this, it gave them a nice feeling. I could tell they were really pleased with themselves ...they said that they were really proud of their work that they produced...

Data extract 5.10 Episode 2 Programme Block 5

In this case the **helping** factors, which are identified as Isla's pedagogic understanding as well as her belief in the children's capacity for learning, were seen to overcome the **opposing** force of the children's preconceived ideas about their lack of ability in the FL.

As Isla continues to articulate her views about effective PFL pedagogy, she builds on the belief she expressed in episode 1 that children should be provided with opportunities for autonomy and independence in their early FL learning experiences (see Data Extract 5.11). This is therefore identified once again as the **object** of this narrative section. Within this programme block Isla begins to recognise the need for teachers to support this autonomy by providing children with what she terms the 'tools' to communicate. In this regard she alludes again to the importance of teaching grammar and providing structures as a basis for supporting the children's work. Her university modules, and her experience of putting strategies into practice in the classroom resulting in positive outcomes in terms of pupil engagement, provide the **sending** force in this narrative extract and the children consistently remain placed as the **receivers** of the benefit.

(TR13) I think *the other thing that is important* is children being able to do things on their own... even in the case of when I did my writing research and they were doing their story boards based off a book... they were using it as a model but at the same time they felt like they'd done that writing all by themselves ...They were really pleased that...it was their own work...(TR31)... I think is really important *to give* the children a bit of a choice and a bit of freedom...

one of the activities I did with the writing is I got them to write the text for a poster...I didn't give them any structure of how I wanted it written so they worked with a partner but they all produced something quite different .. and a lot of them said that they enjoyed that a lot having the choice and not having to do it a certain way...It might not have been the most accurate but it was their words communicated in the way that they wanted to communicate them so for me, and them, that was important.

(TR32) I think it's important to have a balance where accuracy is important but it shouldn't get in the way of children having the freedom to communicate. It comes back to what we think is important when you are communicating for real. So someone very conscious about being accurate all the time...are they just going to only ever say what they can get correct or is it better to have someone who actually has enough confidence to give things a go and although it might not be completely accurate ..they can be understood? It's getting that balance.... giving them freedom but at the same time... having the tools to be free with.

Data Extract 5.11 Episode 2 Programme Block 7

The significance of Isla having the opportunity to apply theory to practice is evident here as she once again describes how opportunities to teach PFLs in school had a transformational effect on the development of her thinking. Isla's understanding of the need to provide learners with the skills, knowledge and opportunity to communicate with some degree of independence stemmed originally from her taught modules. It would seem, however, that it was in the process of enacting these ideas in school that they became an integral part of her framework of beliefs (Fullen, 1993). The resulting strength of her pedagogical skills and understanding as a **helping** force supports the achievement of her object in this instance.

Within this data extract, however, a tension Isla wrestled with in the first episode re-emerges. This tension is specifically identified in relation to Isla's perception of the structural aspects of language having the capacity to both support learning but also to create a barrier to the development of pupil confidence and engagement. Despite the fact that Isla had appeared to have reconciled this tension towards the end of Episode 1 (Programme Block 8), the recurrence of this as an **opponent** in this narrative extract would perhaps suggest that her thinking in this regard has yet to be fully resolved.

It is not only in relation to the teaching of grammar that Isla has yet to draw any firm conclusions. Data Extract 5.12 provides evidence of her changing views about the use of the target language in early foreign language lessons. It is interesting to note that her rationale for using the target language is not explicitly linked to increasing the children's exposure to language or because she thinks this will support the development of learning in any specific way. Instead her motivation appears to stem from her desire to give the children, as **receivers**, a 'positive' experience. Thus, the **object** of engaging pupils in their learning remains the focal point with her personal desire to do so acting as the **sending** force for this object.

Isla identifies the pupils' lack of prior exposure to the foreign language and the difference in her pedagogic approach compared to that of the school as initial barriers to her using the target language in her teaching and, as a result, dissonance emerges between her beliefs and the realities of the classroom. This conflict acts as the **opposing** force in her narrative and appears to constrain and influence Isla's subsequent thinking and practice (Putnam and Borko,

2000) in relation to the use of target language with young language learners. However, what becomes clear over the course of this more lengthy data extract is that the school-based opportunities Isla has been afforded to apply strategies to practice and, perhaps more importantly, her motivation and willingness to persevere in the face of challenge and adversity during the course of these experiences play an important role in empowering Isla and facilitating her success (**helping** actant).

(TR16) Using the target language is also something that I think is important but it was something I actually really found I changed my views on it quite a lot throughout the course. When I first had the opportunity to teach the Year 6 French and they basically said you can do whatever you like and I think that's a chance to just have a bit of an experiment ...I wanted to really give them just a really nice taste of languages...and get them to enjoy the lessons and have a good time. .. and they were really like kind of hooked by that from the start...

But because of their not having much knowledge it meant that a lot of it was going over their heads and I took a step back and thought ...overall it wasn't really appropriate to do the whole lesson in French.... So I learned from that.. I also applied that to doing my lessons with the Year 3s ... I sort of did a mix.... So at the beginning I thought you can't speak any English, it has to be all in French but I learned that actually there's a balance that I need to find and it would change with the class as they get more confident in language.

(TR7) I think the progression in learning could...perhaps be the expectation of how much target language would be used within a lesson which would increase between Year 3 and Year 6. But that would usually depend on the teachers teaching it. In an ideal situation it would be lovely to see a Year 6 class having a pretty much immersion in a language...

(TR18) When I was in school with Year 1 it was a challenge at the beginning and the children weren't used to it so they weren't responding to my instructions in the target language,. .But from the second week the children sort of tuned into it and there was almost unanimous acceptance of the target language for instructions...(TR19) ..It never occurred to me to stop and just say it in English...you do need to give the children time and opportunity... I'm going to keep going until they do pick up on what that means.

Data Extract 5.12 Episode 2 Programme Block 8

Reflecting on what has influenced the development of her vision for PFLs (the **object**) over the course of her training, Isla describes how the complimentary combination of her engagement with her taught module and her experience in school has had a transformational effect on her thinking (Shulman, 1986; Elliott, 2012) and, therefore, her Professional Knowledge (Wideen *et*

al., 1996) (see Data Extract 5.13). In particular, Isla explicitly identifies her module seminars, including the element of collaborative reflection with her peers, being offered the opportunity to engage with action research and, finally, her practical school-based experiences as all having had an important **helping** role to play in enabling her success.

(TR23) I think definitely when I originally applied to do French as my specialism, I was thinking that it would be very much let's learn lots of games and songs and lots of fun things. ... I pictured myself teaching languages and teaching everybody a song and looking at some flash cards and it all being very much like when I used to go to an afternoon French club when I was in primary school... right from *when* we first started having our seminars I realised that there's so much more to it than just the vocab level and it isn't too much to expect of the children... (TR24) I think that *it* was probably the second year module that made me change my thinking the most because I'd just come from a school where the stuff I did with Year 6 was lots of games.. it was a lot of 'draw a line between these two' type activities....In particular that seminar we had about the writing strategies, that ended up becoming my whole dissertation, that really made me stop and think..(TR26) My vision for PFLs was definitely hugely kick started by that module..

and then getting the chance to do that was just fantastic. (TR24) Having a go with the Year 1s and seeing the writing they produced was really like a kind of an eye opener ...and it's something I wanted to carry on...(TR27) I think the research I did for my dissertation had a lot to do with *influencing my vision* as well because when you come up with a question and actually getting to go out and answer that question for myself was a really, really positive experience for me...I was almost sort of proud to say look what I've found out, look what I've done...

(TR26) I *also* really enjoyed the patchwork *reflections*. I think it was a really good way of reflecting on each individual aspect then going back at the end and looking at it altogether was a really helpful way for me to see how my thinking had changed...(TR35) ...how their thoughts compared with mine .. that would make me stop and go back and think about my own experience. Everybody brings something new to the situation..

Data Extract 5.13 Episode 2 Programme Block 10

Conversely, it is widely understood that past experiences often influence social action in unconscious but powerful ways (Toom *et al.*, 2015) therefore Isla's preconceived ideas of language learning and teaching, stemming from her prior experience, can be considered as occupying the **opposing** actantial function in this programme block. However, in surfacing what are often tacit beliefs stemming from past histories, Isla is able to reflect on and articulate the development of her thinking. In this way, she appears more able to distance

herself from replicating past schemas in favour of creating new possibilities for her own practice (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998).

Isla's Episode 2 narrative concludes with her considering the future challenges she feels that she will likely face with regards to being able to enact her vision for PFLs in her own classroom as an NQT (see Data Extract 5.14). It is interesting to note that in doing so her narrative comes full circle as she returns to identifying the **object** of her desire as being the raised status of PFLs. This desire appears to be motivated by her experience thus far in school and a recognition of the factors she deems to dominate teachers' practice (occupying the role of **sending** actant). Data-driven school priorities are presented by Isla as the principal, and very significant, **opposing** force. Interestingly, however, rather than seeking to develop an alternative approach as a means of overcoming this opponent, Isla believes that emulating this focus on assessment for PFLs, with teachers being expected to evidence the children's learning, would act as the **helping** narrative force.

The importance of pupils making progress in their learning has thus far been positioned in relation to securing the engagement of pupils in their language learning. Here, however, we see a notable shift in Isla's thinking as she hypothesises for the first time that a stronger focus on progress and attainment in FLs may also serve to raise the profile of PFLs on a wider whole-school level. This exemplifies the way in which defining beliefs can be understood as a continuous process where perspectives change in relation to both experience and context (Miller, 1990). This apparent contradiction in Isla's narrative could also be argued to support research which points to the inconsistencies often seen between teachers' beliefs and practices and which are judged to arise from the intensifying standards-driven demands of the classroom (Priestley *et al.*, 2012; Eteläpelto *et al.*, 2015).

(TR42) I think PFLs has got its own sort of special way of being side-lined... especially in Year 6 when we've got the pressures of your class' SATs tests coming up, you think well actually we can afford to have an hour off French because we need to do some SPaG and then introduce some level 5 maths practice and we need to do all those things that somebody is going to want to see the results of. (TR43) Data and results and things take priority. ..

(TR44) If we had to prove the children were learning something in PFL then you could in that situation justify why you have been teaching them ... actually seeing it as a real sense of progression in the same way that you would in any subject. I think it would then get that status that other foundation subjects have...

the school that I'm going to work in has an integrated curriculum so all of their foundation subjects are delivered in the context of the topic apart from French. It's on its own so it would be really nice for one day to see it all incorporated. When I did my dissertation lessons I tried to do that for them because their topic was to do with toys ... (TR45) It's something I'd really like to try and bring in to my school to give the language a context, I don't know how feasible it would be but I'd really like to try and actually link the topics with the languages, I don't know if it will happen but I'd love to do that, that's something I'd really, really like to do.

Data Extract 5.14 Episode 2 Programme Block 14

This final programme block does end on a note of cautious optimism as Isla considers the possible contribution she may make to the teaching of PFLs in the school in which she has secured her first teaching post. Conclusions could, therefore, be drawn about the positive contribution Isla's experiences during her training have made in ensuring she is entering the profession with a powerful image of good PFL teaching and learning as well as the knowledge and pedagogic competence necessary for the enactment of agency in the face of anticipated challenges (Brouwer and Korthagen, 2005; Soini *et al.*, 2015).

In summary, while some congruence between Episodes 1 and 2 is evident, in that Isla remains motivated to ensure that pupils have a positive language learning experience, a second **object** of desire begins to emerge. Isla's desire to see the status of FLs raised in the primary school sector surfaces at the outset of the episode, as she reflects specifically on her experiences in school thus far, and again at the close of the episode as she foresees what lies ahead for her in her NQT year. It would appear, therefore, that Isla's experience in school has provided her with a broad, institutional-level perspective on the challenges of teaching PFL in schools which has highlighted potential constraints on her teaching beyond the micro-level of her own

classroom (Troman, 2008). Thus, although Isla's theoretical understanding remains a **sending** force, consistent with Episode 1, her experience in school (both positive and negative) also reveals itself as occupying this actantial role.

When considering the factors which could limit her potential to achieve her object as she enters the profession, Isla draws primarily on her school-based experience thus far. These experiences have led her to identify issues such as the low status of PFLs, lack of teacher confidence and the target-driven culture pervading schools as the primary **opponents**. This would appear to reflect the findings of other studies undertaken with beginning and experienced teachers alike in which they articulate the way in which they feel their practice is constrained by social context and national directives (Priestley *et al.*, 2012). In spite of Isla's acknowledgement of the opponents she is likely to face, however, she clearly perceives herself, at least to a degree, as a pedagogic expert in relation to PFLs. Thus, although Isla (as the narrative **subject**) and her **object** of desire remain in a state of disjunction, she appears to have acquired the necessary beliefs and competence to enable her to look forward with some measure of optimism and confidence in her own capacity to confront these opponents in the future. As Isla reaches the final stage of her ITE course and stands on the threshold of her NQT year, the **helping** forces, formed by the duality of both theoretical knowledge and application of this knowledge in practice (Fullen, 1993; Carl, 2009) could be argued to be the cornerstone of her future empowerment (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998).

5.1.3 Episode 3

This third and final episode takes place at the end of Isla's NQT year and sees her reflecting back on her first year of teaching. The narrative begins with the acknowledgment of her inability to teach any foreign language lessons in her NQT year as a result of the other pressures dominating her practice (see Data Extract 5.15). The strength of the disappointment Isla professes to feel, indicated by her repetitive use of the emotive language '*I'm ashamed*', reflects the findings of Allen's (2009) study as she quickly experiences the collapse of the idealistic notions of teaching PFLs and the sense of empowerment with which she ended her university based training. Instead Isla has been forced to adopt survival strategies (Senese, 2007) as a means of meeting the pressures associated with school performativity.

(TR1) Well I'm ashamed to say I've hardly been able to do any *foreign language* teaching this year. I hate that we haven't, but with the SATs, with it being the new curriculum and everything, every minute of every day has been making sure that the children were absolutely prepared for that... I'm ashamed to say that we haven't done any...

(TR3) I'm actually taking French over next year *as* the Subject Leader. *The other subject leader* left at Christmas... (TR4) It wasn't a huge priority as it was, but *when she left* I think not having a specific person who was monitoring, and it being handed over to lots of people to share, meant that it wasn't really being kept up, or wasn't really happening, so I'm hoping to change that. I've got lots of ideas for next year that I'm going to put in place, now I've, kind of, found my own feet as a teacher in general...

(TR7) Definitely the pressure of SATs has been the biggest *challenge* for me this year, just knowing how much we needed to cover and needed to assess...and evidencing as well. ...(TR9) The Reading, Writing and Maths are the big focus, because those are the ones that go through to schools data, and go through to Ofsted. As much as that's not what we want to focus on as a school, it is how it does end up happening.

Data Extract 5.15 Episode 3 Programme Block 1

Although not explicitly identified by Isla herself, it is revealed that it is she who can be considered as fulfilling the **receiving** actantial role in this first narrative section as she appears to consider the degree to which she is able to teach FLs as a personal victory or failure. The externally driven pressures dominating school priorities (data / results / SATs) are presented as **opposing** forces and are viewed as currently having a more powerful influence on the status of languages in the curriculum and Isla's own classroom than her desire and ability to teach it (the rival **helping** forces). Although this disconnect has constrained her practice thus far, it also serves to act as the **sending** actantial force which motivates her to seek to ensure that foreign languages are taught in the school (the **object**) the following year as she adopts her new role as subject leader. Thus Isla appears to retain her future-facing optimism.

As Isla continues to share her plans for PFLs as she enters her second year of teaching and takes on the role of subject leader, her primary **object** remains to ensure foreign languages are in fact taught across the school (see Data Extract 5.16). This desire is motivated by her experience as an NQT which has revealed to her that PFLs occupies a low status as a curriculum subject in her school (the **sending** actant). The teachers' own lack of subject knowledge and time constraints on the timetable are considered explicitly by Isla as being the key challenges, or **opposing** actants, which threaten to stand in the way of the successful

achievement of her object. Conversely Isla's own pedagogic knowledge and skills are inferred as having a **helping** influence on her confidence and willingness to take a lead role in attempting to address these issues and thus supporting the development of PFLs on a whole school level (Short, 1994; Toom *et al.*, 2015). In addition to the skills and confidence Isla herself possesses, she also describes her decision to emulate a strategy adopted by another subject leader as a means of ensuring languages is taught by her colleagues. Thus, while Isla's social context can be viewed as constraining the enactment of her object on the one hand, on the other hand her experience and knowledge of this context can be judged as providing a means of empowering her (Priestley *et al.*, 2012; Eteläpeltö *et al.*, 2013).

...I'm going to plan all the lessons and just hand it over. (TR11) *for all the teachers in every year group...* because I know that if I don't, it won't happen. At the moment, our RE is planned for us by the RE Manager... And it happens, because she does that. .. (TR12) ...So I'm going to take that as a lead, and I'm going to plan all of it. The idea that I want to do is have four projects per year group, ...*so almost one per half term...* with a bit of lenience for, like, the shorter Spring Terms, and that kind of thing, and just knowing about the time pressures. Putting six in would be too ambitious...

Data Extract 5.16 Episode 3 Programme Block 3

At this point in the narrative that which occupies the **receiver** actant begins to change. Whilst the children have in both Episode 1 and 2 dominated this actantial role, and still ultimately benefit from the object of Isla's actions here, her explicit focus becomes the teachers. This change can be attributed to the causal relationship between the narrative *context* (her school) and the *content* of the narrative (Toolan, 2001). In other words, the experience of working within the school's community of practice provides Isla with a deeper insight into the challenges her colleagues face and what is required to support them and this influences her goals and practices (see Data Extract 5.17).

(TR14) *So the projects* are all different so that we can work on different skills in each year group and building in the grammar...That would again be something that I'd have on the planning, and the *grammar* would be very explicit...(TR25) ...*grammar* adds a whole layer of complication when you're teaching a language and it's not one you're that confident with, but my idea of having explicit grammar within the planning I give to staff will hopefully support that.

Data Extract 5.17 Episode 3 Programme Block 5

The programme block which follows in Isla's narrative serves to amplify the shift in focus to her colleagues as the primary **receivers**. In Episode 2 she affirms her belief that the use of target language is key to supporting the engagement of pupils in their learning. In contrast, in this section of Episode 3, her feelings of solidarity with her colleagues and her belief in the need to support them by not placing unrealistic expectations on them appear to take priority (see Data Extract 5.18). Thus, if we infer that the **object** of this narrative section remains consistent with the previous programme blocks, in that she is seeking to ensure the successful implementation of foreign language lessons across the school, then it is Isla's recently developed empathy towards her colleagues and understanding of the challenges they face in implementing PFLs which will act as her **helping** agents. In this way Isla believes she will be able to prevail over their existing lack of confidence and subject knowledge which currently act as the principal **opponents** which threaten to obstruct the achievement of her goal.

(TR17) Last year I talked about working towards full immersion in the language but now I would say it's pretty far from being achievable. It's not going to happen. ... because of just not having the expertise in every class to teach it, and it wouldn't be in any way fair to expect any of my colleagues to suddenly just start delivering lessons in French... It wouldn't be fair at all. It would be very unrealistic...

Data Extract 5.18 Episode 3 Programme Block 7

Whilst there is little evidence to suggest that Isla has abandoned her beliefs in favour of the established practices of her new school context, as Allen (2009) suggests is often the case for beginning teachers, it could certainly be argued that this extract of Isla's narrative exemplifies the way in which she has been, at least in part, influenced by the attitudes and strategic behaviours of the social group to which she now belongs; a phenomenon identified as 'socialisation' (Brouwer and Korthagen, 2005). Equally it could be considered that Isla's sense of empowerment in relation to PFLs is 'bounded' (Oolbekkink-Marchand *et al.*, 2017:44) in that she plans to act on her own beliefs only in so far as she feels these plans are achievable in the context of her school environment.

Following Isla's more lengthy emphasis on her desire to support her colleagues, her reflections then return to the children as the focus, or **receiving** actant, of her narrative (see Data Extract 5.19). Consistent with Episodes 1 and 2, Isla identifies that the **object** of her desire with regards to her learners is to ensure that they are provided with a positive language learning

experience. Isla identifies that her motivation for this (the **sending** actant) stems principally from her overarching and more general philosophy for primary education. It is interesting to note here that Isla explicitly states that these beliefs have stemmed exclusively from her classroom experience. At this juncture she does not consider her university course as having influenced these in any way. This is incongruent with Isla's reflections in Episode 2 where she had considered in some depth the way in which her specialism modules shaped the development of her thinking.

(TR22) *The other thing that I think is really important* is the children experiencing foreign languages in a positive way...Just seeing how language can be exciting and can be enjoyable and can be interesting... (TR25) I would say that I believe *the things that are important to me in PFLs are important for me for teaching in general*... Just having taught this year, having been a teacher of my own class this year, regardless of what subject it was in, things like pupil progress and outcomes and empowerment are just how I like to teach anyway. (TR31) *This philosophy* definitely underpins everything. (TR25) ... it then seems natural to also teach languages like that, which is what I'm hoping to achieve throughout the school.

Data Extract 5.19 Episode 3 Programme Block 8

This data extract therefore provides evidence of Isla avoiding the 'contingent pragmatism' which Priestley *et al.* (2012:552) contend is adopted by many teachers. Instead Isla appears to seek to ensure that her practice instead reflects her own professional values and aspirations (Noddings and Enright, 1983; Winter, 2003).

Isla's reaffirmation of the duality of her desire, to ensure that PFLs is taught in the school and to safeguard the engagement of the pupils in relation to this teaching, draws her narrative to its conclusion (see Data Extract 5.20). While the **object** of this programme block remains consistent with those that precede it, this extract appears much more introspective in nature as Isla considers more explicitly her personal motivating force for this desire. Until this point in her narrative her university modules and her experience in schools have primarily been identified as fulfilling the **sending** actantial role compelling Isla to provide an alternative approach to PFLs to that which she has witnessed in school. In this final reflection, however, she explicitly recognises that her motivation also arises from her desire to share her knowledge and skills with her colleagues. The recognition of the impact she is potentially able to have on the school is a central tenet of her sense of autonomy, which in turn supports the growth of her own sense of professional worth (Short, 1994).

(TR32) I have never stopped to think about what motivates me *to want to get French taught in the school*. I never thought to not, really...knowing that it's something that I can bring to our school that will be something really special...Yes, bringing something to our children that's going to really enrich their school experience, that they might not have got ...had I been at a different school. I think I feel quite like this is my really special talent that I can bring, and I want to share it. (TR33) It makes me feel empowered and boosts my confidence as a teacher, especially as an NQT and... as a young, relatively inexperienced teacher still, I've got something quite distinctive to offer, haven't I?

Data Extract 5.20 Episode 3 Programme Block 11

The pedagogic understanding she has acquired through her course and the increased professional self-confidence and autonomy Isla gains as a result of being able to offer something distinctive to the school can be viewed as connected directly to her level of self-fulfilment (Eteläpeltö *et al.*, 2013). It can also, therefore, be deemed as providing the **helping** actantial force by which current negative teacher attitudes and the existing low status accorded to PFL can be overcome (the **opposing** forces). Consequently, we can infer that, should Isla succeed in establishing PFL as an engaging and valued subject in the school's curriculum, the beneficiaries (**receivers**) of this would become not only the teachers and pupils but also herself.

In conclusion, within this third narrative episode as Isla establishes herself in her new school, there is evidence of the broader lens through which she perceives the enactment of her vision for PFLs. Whilst the **object** of her desire remains consistent with both previous episodes, she considers raising the profile of PFLs and ensuring engagement and success in language learning as goals not only for the children in her own class but also in terms of what she would like to achieve across the school as a whole. Consequently, the **receiving** actant shifts from the learners to her colleagues in the first instance and this dominated the majority of the programme blocks in this final episode.

Her motivating force, or **sending** actant, remains for the most part her experiences in the school which have exposed the low status of PFLs and the lack of teacher confidence and enthusiasm for the subject. This episode concludes, however, with an explicit and sudden realisation that her motivation has also become rooted in having her particular pedagogic skills and knowledge in PFLs recognised by her colleagues as a means of enhancing her own

professional self-confidence and sense of worth. In this regard the current low status associated with PFLs and the lack of teacher subject knowledge in the school, which are perceived throughout as **opposing** forces, ironically help her to stand in opposition to that and can perhaps be argued to also fulfil a **helping** role. Although Isla remains tentatively hopeful about the impact she may be able to have in her capacity as new subject leader the following year, for the moment she remains disjoined from the object of her desire. Despite feeling that she possesses the knowledge and skills necessary to both teach PFLs and to support the practice of her colleagues, she has yet to have the opportunity. The narrative subject (Isla) and the object continue to remain actualized (Schleiffer, 1987).

5.1.4 Isla's Story – a Summary

By means of concluding the analysis and discussion of Isla's narrative, a diagram is provided which represents the dominant actants which have emerged in each episode (see Figure 5.1). This diagram was adapted from Schleiffer's (1987:186) representation of Greimas' model of actantial analysis, as explored in Chapter 3 (see Figure 3.4). It is acknowledged that this diagram does not fully represent all of the subtleties and complexities examined in the analysis which has come before in this chapter. It does, however, provide a useful summary of the way in which the actantial roles in her narrative have been influenced over time and in response to her changing social context. Colour has been used to differentiate between the three episodes. Lightest blue represents the dominant actants in Episode 1 (Isla's patchwork reflections undertaken in response to her PFL specialist modules and school placements), mid blue represents Episode 2 (the narrative interview which saw Isla reflecting back on her learning over the course of her training), and dark blue provides an overview of Episode 3 (the narrative interview which took place towards the end of Isla's NQT year).

Isla's beliefs about the principles of effective PFLs, originally established and articulated in her specialism module, remained unwavering over the course of her studies and first year of teaching. This is evidenced by the consistency in her object of desire over the three phases of the study. The influence of her school-based experiences is, nonetheless, significant. For Isla, this influence manifested itself in relation to the wider context of PFL provision in schools. Throughout her university-based studies, for example, her thinking was primarily limited to her own practice. As her experiences in school grew, and particularly as she entered the

profession, Isla increasingly came to recognise the challenges faced by teachers in implementing this more recent addition to the curriculum. Consequently the actantial forces acting on and shaping the final episode of Isla's narrative became less theoretically framed and more strongly situated in the lived reality of teachers' practice.

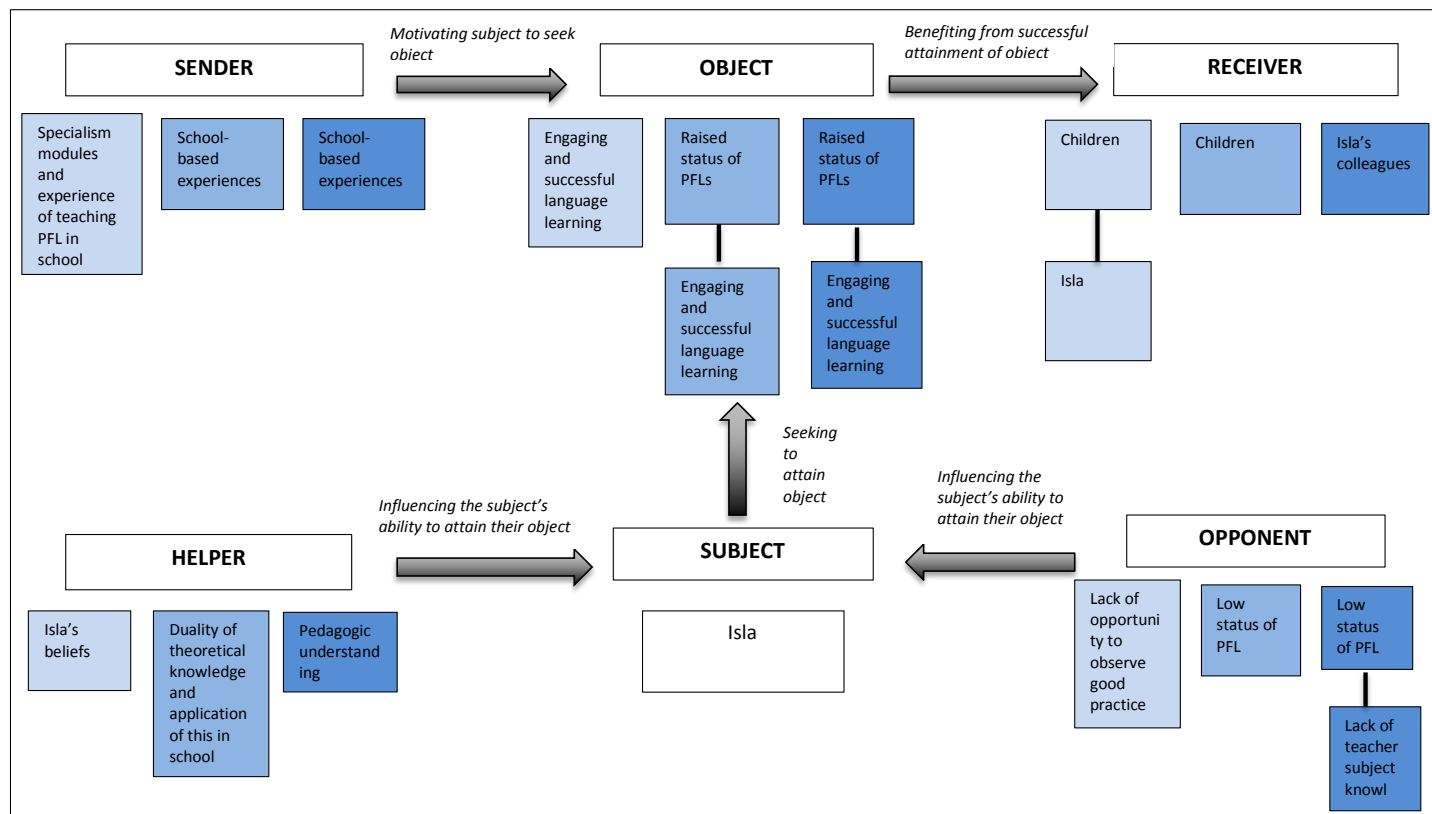


Figure 5.1 Summary of actantial shifts in Isla's narrative

5.2 Holly's Story

Holly was twenty years old when she began her first PFL specialist subject module. Her formal language qualification was restricted to a GCSE in French. She did not pursue any foreign language learning into her 'A' Levels although she admits to feeling regret over this decision because she enjoys languages. This was her reason for selecting PFLs for her specialism modules on her teacher training programme.

5.2.1 Episode 1

Holly begins her first narrative episode with a recognition that her initial justification for PFL pedagogy was based on what she perceived as being of '*use*' to the learner in relation to visiting the country where the language is spoken (see Data Extract 5.21). This rather '*utilitarian*' justification (Williams, 2001) for FL learning inevitably suggests that the development of children's oracy (speaking and listening) skills should take priority in the primary FL classroom. Her seminar reading and the collaborative reflection and discussion with her peers (the **sending** actant in this programme block) have prompted her, however, to question this rationale. Holly begins instead to consider the importance of literacy, and in particular writing, in early foreign language lessons as a means of supporting the language learning process rather than simply as an end result (Wolff, 2000; Manchón, 2014). Thus, the **object** of her desire can be considered as ensuring a balance of focus on oracy and literacy within her FL lessons.

The **helping** force in this extract is her developing theoretically-framed pedagogic knowledge which is judged to be pivotal in overcoming her preconceived views and assumptions about early foreign language teaching and learning (the **opposing** actant). Holly places the children explicitly in the actantial role of **receiver**. However as Holly develops her own understanding of effective PFL pedagogy, arguably she is also seen to be occupying this narrative position.

(TR4) I felt that there were a lot of interesting things to consider from this session. The idea was raised that some consider it to be more important for children to be able to speak and read in another language than it is to be able to write. This is something that has really made me think...As we discussed during the seminar, it would of course be more helpful to be able to read and speak a Foreign Language should you find yourself in a situation where you were in a foreign country. However, I don't think that this means being able to write is not an important aspect of Foreign Language learning. Through writing, children will be able to grasp a better understanding of things like word order and grammar rules like agreements which are not as obvious when language is just spoken, because they will be practicing....Writing gives children the opportunity to put what they know into practice and in context...

Data Extract 5.21 Episode 1 Programme Block 1

Holly's thinking with regards to the purpose of early foreign language learning is seen to develop further in response to her second seminar (the **sending** actant) and is evidenced in Data Extract 5.22. The view she raised at the outset of the module, that FL learning prepares children for using it should they find themselves abroad in later life, has been replaced with a rationale for meaningful and relevant learning which is tied much more closely to the here and now of each lesson (the **object** of her desire). Holly's views are now much more aligned with those of Williams (2001) and Kirsch (2012) who advocate a need to provide children with regular opportunities to encounter and use the FL in practical and purposeful ways as a means of sustaining their motivation. Although Holly continues to frame her narrative in a way that positions the children as sole **receivers** of the benefit, Holly herself can also be considered as occupying this actantial role as she continues to develop her own understanding and vision for PFL practice. Her growing pedagogic knowledge in relation to effective PFL provision remains as the **helping** force which appears to be acting to overcome her prior assumptions (the **opposing** force in this section of her narrative).

(TR7) As I've always enjoyed language learning, even as a child, I guess it has never really crossed my mind that others may find it pointless and question its purpose. As teachers, it is arguably our job to make language learning enjoyable and also provide a sense of meaning. Children become much more engaged in an activity if they feel that there is a sense of purpose and a reason for what they are doing. We discussed the teaching of grammar during the session and I agree that I think I would address it if it was relevant to the lesson...

Data Extract 5.22 Episode 1 Programme Block 3

As Holly's narrative returns to a consideration of the place of literacy in the PFL classroom, her desire to provide an engaging context for children's language learning emerges as the central **object** of her narrative (see Data Extract 5.23). Specifically, she considers reading stories in the target language as an important pedagogical tool for supporting FL learning and for overcoming the more disconnected and repetitive noun-based approach to teaching FLs which research suggests is more widespread in primary schools (Cable *et al.*, 2010; Martin, 2012). This approach, which is judged to negatively impact on pupil engagement, is identified as the **opposing** force which Holly seeks to overcome. Her seminar and reading (the **sending** actant) are both cited as prompting her thinking and supporting the development of her understanding. This pedagogic understanding is central to Holly being able to achieve the object of her desire and thus fulfils the **helping** actantial role in this section. That which occupies the receiver actantial role remains consistent with the previous programme blocks.

(TR13) I think that storytelling is a really important tool... This relates to some of the teaching ideas that we looked at during semester 1, such as reinforcing children's knowledge of colours by reading them a story about colours in the target language...children do not necessarily enjoy the repetitive nature of language learning, but by re-reading a book, they will be reminding themselves of the vocabulary but through an activity that they enjoy...

Data Extract 5.23 Episode 1 Programme Block 5

It is at this point in Holly's narrative that the context for her reflections changes. Programme block 6 marks the first in a series of reflections which summarise and describe Holly's experience in a Year 5 class during her second year school placement (see Data Extract 5.24). Holly begins by apologising to her peers for her lack of regular engagement thus far, identifying workload as a barrier to her being able to engage more regularly in on-line discussions with her peers. Despite the challenge of managing the expectations placed upon her in school and the fact that contribution to the on-line forum while the trainees were on placement was voluntary, this response would suggest Holly wants to support her peers and to remain a member of this community.

(TR14) Sorry I have been absolutely useless at contributing to this forum during placement, things are so busy! I've had a look through some of the other posts that have been made and it's so lovely to see the different experiences that people have had/are having whilst on placement. It's clear that everyone has grown in confidence after having the opportunity to teach a series of language lessons - an opportunity that many of us had not had prior to this SE.

The school I was placed at taught Spanish rather than French, however they were really supportive in terms of allowing me to incorporate some French and teaching some sessions. The one issue that I experienced was that the children usually had their language sessions on a Tuesday afternoon but for this half term, their language lessons were being replaced by going swimming for the afternoon at the local leisure centre. As a result, I had to fit in my language lessons where there was time.

Data Extract 5.24 Episode 1 Programme Block 6

Within this section of the narrative the **object** of Holly's desire is to be able to teach PFLs (French in particular). This desire is motivated by the lack of opportunity she has had in school up until this point in her training (the **sending** actant). This programme block marks a shift in the actantial role of **receiver**. Holly judges that experience of teaching PFLs during this school placement will support a growth in her own confidence. This view would seem to be corroborated by Fullen (1993) who argues that such practical experiences are fundamental to ensuring trainees are able to connect scholarship with practice, enabling them to become skilled at employing the more theoretical ideas from their training to the classroom. Holly can thus be seen to occupy the role of main beneficiary in this narrative section. Her willingness to be proactive in order to negotiate opportunities to teach French as well as the willingness of the school to be flexible and to allow Holly to teach the FL of her choice (French instead of Spanish) are judged as fulfilling the **helping** actantial role. Holly, however, identifies that often other priorities take precedence over the FL lessons and thus the lower status of PFLs can be considered as the primary **opposing** force which poses a serious threat to Holly being able to achieve her goal. This opposing force would seem to parallel the weakening commitment for FLs which recent research suggests is evident in many other schools in England (Tinsley and Board, 2017)

Holly's narrative resumes as she reflects on her experience to date of teaching French during her school placement (see Data Extract 5.25). Despite Holly's emerging belief in the importance of providing an engaging context for language learning (as identified in Programme Block 5), it was the class teacher who requested that she should link her French lessons to the

children's World War 2 topic. This request therefore acted as the **sending** force, motivating Holly's desire to successfully plan and teach a cross-curricular unit of work for languages (the narrative **object**). Although it was not Holly's own vision for PFLs which prompted her chosen pedagogic approach, she does explicitly consider that making links to the children's existing learning would be '*beneficial*' for them. This belief, therefore, acts as the **helping** force, enabling her to overcome her lack of planning and teaching experience and the children's lack of prior knowledge (the **opposing** forces). This narrative section illustrates, at least to some extent, Gudmundsdottir's (1990) view that teachers' beliefs support and strongly shape the pedagogic decisions they employ in the classroom.

For my first session, my class teacher wanted me to link it in with what they had been studying during their Topic time (which was World War Two). ...Initially, I was slightly apprehensive about teaching this lesson as I was really struggling to make connections, particularly as the children had no previous experience of French but I knew that it would be very beneficial if I could link it to their topic...

It was lovely to see how passionate the children were and how much they enjoyed the session. Following that session, many of the children would greet me in French when I passed them in the corridor and tell me how much they had enjoyed the lesson. One child even asked if he could have a copy of the checklist so that he could practice at home! They had been writing diary entries in their Literacy lessons and he wrote about how much he was enjoying French which was great to read.

Data Extract 5.25 Episode 1 Programme Block 7

In the final paragraph of this programme block Holly also recognises that the positive responses from the children are affirming for her, effecting a growth in her confidence. Engendering pupil enjoyment in their language learning now re-emerges as being of importance to Holly and appears to be the measure by which she judges the extent to which she has achieved the object of her desire. Thus, although the children ultimately benefit from the successful attainment of the object of this narrative section, Holly is also identified as occupying the **receiving** actantial role. The importance Holly ascribes to pupil engagement in their FL learning reflects the same preoccupation of many teachers in the primary sector (Cable *et al.*, 2010; Martin, 2012; Jones and Coffey, 2013).

Holly's narrative continues as she describes the further opportunities she was afforded to teach French to two Year 5 classes in her school (see Data Extract 5.26). Semiotic analysis of this extract reveals a complexity in the deeper level of Holly's narrative which is less obvious

on first reading. Holly's desire to foster the children's enjoyment appears to dominate her narrative here and initially could be judged as being her goal. Closer analysis, however, reveals that it is in fact her desire to develop her own confidence in planning and teaching PFLs which is the principal **object** of her desire. Her own pedagogic knowledge, stemming at least in part from her seminars, and which has led to high levels of learner engagement can therefore be judged as the **helping** function in enabling her to achieve her object.

I was in a year 5 class in a two form entry school ...this enabled me to work with both classes ...I taught a session on colours to both classes... I wanted to use a variety of different activities to keep the children interested. They responded really well to the flashcards in my previous lesson, so I chose to use those again, getting the children to say them, shout them, whisper them to a friend etc. Then I read 'Toutes les Couleurs' with them because I had absolutely loved it when we looked at it in our seminars. ... As I was reading the story to them, they had to hold up the correct coloured card when appropriate. The first group that I did it with were not as accurate in their pronunciation but were very good at recognising the colours...whereas I experienced the exact opposite in the other class! The children in both classes really enjoyed the story and they were all very excited when I explained to them that we would now play a game of Splat!

Once again, the children were very keen to show off to me what they had learned after the session...It was really rewarding to see how much they enjoyed the sessions, how well they retained the information and how keen they were to learn more! I was very nervous about teaching language lessons but this has really improved my confidence. However, as the time for the lessons was quite short, I did not get round to introducing them to any writing in French which I would have liked to have had a go at.

Data Extract 5.26 Episode 1 Programme Block 8

Overall Holly places the children as the beneficiaries of the object of her desire. However she also explicitly judges that a growth in her own levels of pedagogic confidence has arisen as a result of the success of her lessons. Holly can therefore also be considered as occupying the **receiver** role in this narrative section. Despite the positive nature of this extract, Holly does recognise that her ability to fully achieve her object of desire was undermined. She identifies that she would like to have '*have a go at*' teaching writing to the children but the competing demands on the timetable were deemed to take priority over timetabled PFL sessions. This **opposing** factor, which acted as a barrier to Holly being able to develop her confidence in this aspect of PFL pedagogy, reflects the low status of PFLs nationally as evidenced by recent research (Tinsley and Board, 2017).

Episode 1 of Holly's narrative concludes with her positioned back at university (see Data Extract 5.27). In her final reflective patch, which Holly writes in response to her leadership and management module in Year 3, she considers in particular the possibility of being asked to adopt a subject leader role for PFL. Her seminar content can therefore be seen as the **sending** actant, motivating her to consider how she might confidently adopt such a role (the **object** of her desire). Holly thus occupies the position of **receiver** in this concluding programme block.

(TR15) ...Like many others on this forum, the thought of being a subject leader at such an early stage in my career is one that is very daunting. Especially when it sounds as though it could be quite likely, due to a potential lack of confidence/experience that others have in this subject area. However, some of the readings that we have looked at within session have helped me to begin to feel more confident about taking on this role. For example, I very much pictured a subject leader as working entirely on their own and being solely responsible for all the decisions made. However, I have come to realise that it is about working as a team and getting feedback from all other members of staff. ... This makes me feel a lot more comfortable in terms of adopting a subject leader role.

Data Extract 5.27 Episode 1 Programme Block 9

Despite Holly not yet being in post, this extract reveals her lack of self-confidence as being the **opposing** force threatening to thwart her ability to achieve the object of this narrative section. Holly's perceived lack of experience, which is rooted in her status as a beginning teacher, is already eroding the confidence she has in her ability to influence PFL pedagogy beyond her own practice. The impact this sense of 'noviceness' has on beginning teacher agency is reflected in studies undertaken by Allen (2009) and Mutton *et al.* (2010). Holly's seminar reading, on the other hand, has highlighted the potential of collaborative working practices with more experienced colleagues as a potential **helping** force. Therefore, Holly's ability to draw on her new colleagues for support, and to overcome her lack of self-confidence, will perhaps determine the extent to which Holly feels able to influence PFL curriculum and practice as she embarks on her teaching career.

Analysis of Episode 1 reveals a degree of inconsistency and complexity in Holly's narrative. At the outset of this episode and in the context of Holly's university-based learning, module seminars are identified as driving (**sending**) the development of her theoretically framed understanding and beliefs about PFL pedagogy. In particular Holly appears to consider the need to provide engaging and meaningful contexts for children's foreign language learning as

the principal **object** of her desire. What becomes evident however is that, as Holly embarks on her school experience, it is not these beliefs which guide her classroom practice. For example, although her lessons which link to the children's World War 2 topic could be considered to be aligned with her views about the importance of providing a context for language learning, these lessons were in fact developed in response to expectations set by her teacher tutor and not as a direct result of her own beliefs. This programme block begins to reveal the complexity of factors, and in particular the significance of social context, which can influence the practice of beginning teachers (Goodson and Walker, 1991; Pinar et al., 2008).

The development of Holly's theoretical pedagogic knowledge does, however, have an important role to play as the dominant **helping** force during her school experience. This knowledge acts as a means of overcoming her lack of experience and confidence in relation to teaching PFLs and her prior assumptions about early foreign language learning pedagogy (the chief **opposing** actantial forces). Despite these barriers she is therefore able to plan and teach lessons which she judges have engaged and motivated her learners. This becomes crucial for Holly as a desire to seek a growth in her pedagogic confidence begins to emerge as a more dominant **object** of desire.

Both Holly and her learners can be considered as occupying the **receiving** actantial role throughout the episode and certainly the way in which Holly frames her narrative often seems to place the children in this role. The influence Holly's specialism modules and her experience in school have had on the development of her thinking and confidence, however, leads to Holly more consistently coming to the fore in this role.

5.2.2 Episode 2

This first programme block of Holly's second narrative episode sees her reflecting on her experiences and learning over the course of her training. She begins by articulating her own vision for PFLs (see Data Extract 5.28). She identifies her Year 2 specialism module as being the **sending** force for her belief (and **object** of desire) that teachers need to provide a purpose and context for children's language learning as a means of engaging them (Brown, 2001; Watzke, 2007; Hood and Tobutt, 2015). Her understanding of how to contextualise the children's

learning fulfils the **helping** actantial role, enabling her to overcome the potential for languages to be disconnected from the rest of the children's learning and thus being perceived as not having any real value or purpose (the **opposing** force in this narrative section). Although Holly was often positioned as beneficiary in Episode 1, here we see a shift as the children are explicitly identified by her as the **receivers** of the benefit.

(TR3) I think for me, my vision and belief about primary language learning links with what we did in Year 2 in terms of meaningful links that are most important. To see a purpose to why they're learning a language ...just so the children can see it's not just something we do on a Tuesday afternoon once a week or whatever, it's something that's actually got real value. ...So you've got to have those hooks to excite children so they can see why they're learning it because we're going to set up a café and you need to be able to speak to the waiter, that kind of thing. Then they actually want to engage in it and they will see a reason why they're doing it so I think that's important.

(TR5) I also think when there's the opportunities for cross curricular I think that can create a context...

Data Extract 5.28 Episode 2 Programme Block 1

As Holly continues to articulate her views about PFLs (see Data Extract 5.29), she considers the importance of developing children's intercultural understanding (IU). The **sending** actant, which prompted Holly's belief that IU has a valuable place in FL lessons, is clearly identified in this extract as her PFL specialist modules. This is, however, the first time that Holly has raised developing children's appreciation of other cultures as being the **object** of her desire with regards to her vision for PFLs. It is therefore not explicitly evident what aspect of her modules has prompted this development in her thinking.

I think the specialism has made me think about the cultural understanding a bit more, I'd not really considered that as a part of language learning, actually giving children the opportunity to understand other cultures. ...However just the fact that there are some things that are similar across cultures but some things are different and those differences are fine and no one way is right or wrong, so just like an appreciation I think of other cultures.

(TR4) I think it's difficult, it depends on the setting the school's in as well in terms of how much emphasis they'll place on intercultural understanding themselves. So I think a school that is more culturally diverse is more likely to place more emphasis on... celebrating other children's languages. The last school I was in had a lot of EAL children so it was very much like a celebration

I don't think that the *new programme of study* makes it explicit that intercultural understanding should be taught I don't think it's as much a key focus necessarily now. That's why I think it would be more down to the school how much they chose to do it and like I say it depends I guess on who's making those choices and what they think is important as to whether that will happen or not, which is unfortunate.

Data Extract 5.29 Episode 2 Programme Block 2

The lack of explicit mention of IU in the new National Curriculum Programme of Study for PFLs (DfE, 2013) is perceived as a significant **opposing** force as this leads, in Holly's view, to schools considering it to be optional. This view that developing children's cultural awareness is not always prioritised in the classroom is certainly borne out by research (Powell *et al.*, 2000; Hennebry, 2014). Despite this, however, Holly does consider that the demographics of a school can act as a **helping** force as she believes that schools where cultural diversity is the norm are more likely to celebrate different cultures and to perceive IU as being important. This belief appears to stem from her experience in a school with high numbers of children with EAL. This reference to her experience in school perhaps raises questions about whether the **sending** actant for this section of her narrative is, as she identifies, her taught modules or whether in fact it is the opportunity she has had to spent time in a school with a culturally diverse population.

As Holly's reflections continue, she returns to the view she expressed in Episode 1 that ensuring a balance of oracy and literacy skills is crucial in early FL learning (See Data Extract 5.30). On first reading of this programme block it would appear that Holly's object of desire is to ensure that children have opportunities for writing in their PFL lessons. On closer analysis, however, her primary **object** is revealed as her desire to develop a more communicative

language teaching approach. This is characterised by ensuring that children (who continue to remain as the primary **receivers** in her episode 2 narrative) are able to apply known language for a real purpose and to use this with some degree of autonomy to communicate '*what they want to say*' (Grenfell and Harris, 2014). Research, including her own action research project, has advanced her understanding of the place of writing as supporting FL development (Kirsch, 2008; Manchón, 2014) and is therefore accorded the position of **sending** actant. Writing can therefore be considered the principal **helper**, enabling her to achieve the object, while the alternative noun-based oracy approach to FL teaching prevalent in primary schools (Macaro, 2014) can be inferred as the **opponent**. The importance of supporting children to exercise some degree of autonomy in their foreign language use is returned to as an important tenet later in this episode.

..For it to be purposeful children need to do speaking, listening, reading, writing... there's a bit of research that I've used quite often when I was doing French assignments and dissertation. It was about that children like speaking/listening but they get a bit sick of it, all the games all the time, and I think that's what I initially thought, kind of languages, oh yeah let's play a French game, let's sing a song, that's all it's about. .. Definitely, I would say that my thinking has changed about that from when I remember doing languages.. I do think you need that balance between you've learned all that vocabulary, now we're actually going to put it into practice.

(TR7) I think writing helps you, I mean a child can reel off a load of colours but what you want to be able to do once they've learned those colours is to be able to put them into a sentence and describe their cat or their dog or whatever. I don't necessarily think you can say a child has learned the language if they just have a list of words. I mean they've learned some things but in terms of it being purposeful and meaningful I'm not so sure... I think they need that understanding of how to construct a sentence so that they can actually communicate what they want to say. Even if it's not 100% correct, you can have a go and someone would understand what you're trying to say...I think that's more being able to speak another language if they can do that I think...

Data Extract 5.30 Episode 2 Programme Block 3

Holly's on-going considerations of her views about effective PFL practice prompts a more introspective section of her narrative as she reflects back on her course and the impact this has had on her thinking and learning (see Data Extract 5.31). Her desire to develop her own pedagogic understanding and beliefs in relation to PFLs (the narrative **object**) sees Holly re-

positioned as the primary **receiver**, appropriating this actantial role from the children for the first time in this episode.

(TR9) ...I think *what has influenced* my thinking a lot *was the* discussions or readings that we've done in seminars. My whole thing about children not always wanting to do speaking/listening came from a reading that we did in I think maybe second year .. it sort of opened me up to a new way of thinking... and then we'd come into seminars and we'd have a chat about that. That way of working really moved my thinking on. ..It challenged what we thought and our own experiences. So like if you've only ever seen games then that's probably how you would teach yourself ...

The other thing that helped me was the sessions themselves as we were looking at loads of different ways of teaching and we got to plan lessons ...and you just realised there's not one set way you've got to do *it*...

(TR11)... I think being in school also helped *develop my thinking* and seeing how things really are and also trying things out in the classroom that we talked about in our seminars. Like seeing how children respond to things. That has made a difference too.

Data Extract 5.31 Episode 2 Programme Block 5

Her engagement in reading and the subsequent collaborative discussions in seminars (the **sending** actant) are initially recognised as '*opening up a new way of thinking*' for Holly and were judged to '*move her thinking on*'. She valued the practical nature of her seminars as well as the opportunities she was presented with to apply aspects from her taught modules in the classroom on her school placements. The design of her course provided her with opportunities to explore new ideas and to connect this knowledge to a classroom context (Putnam and Borko, 2000). This enabled her to develop a philosophy for good PFL practice as well as to acquire the beginnings of a range of pedagogic tools and strategies consistent with that philosophy (Feiman-Nemser, 2001) and can be regarded as the **helping** force in this narrative section. This also supported her in overcoming her preconceived views about PFLs stemming from her prior learning experiences and observations in school which, if left unchallenged and un-critiqued, present significant **opponents** to the development of her learning and subsequent practice (Hargreaves, 2012).

Holly's articulation of her beliefs about effective PFL teaching and learning continues to dominate her narrative and her thoughts about the place of grammar in early FL learning resurface in Programme Block 6 (see Data Extract 5.32). Specifically, the principal narrative **object** emerges as her desire to reconcile the need to teach grammar as an integral element of

language learning with protecting children's levels of confidence and willingness to risk-take when using the language. Although Holly does not identify herself what experience has led her to this point in her thinking, this section resonates with her narrative in episode 1 and thus we can infer that it is the cognitive dissonance created by her university-based specialism modules which has fulfilled the **sending** actantial role here.

(TR12) In terms of grammar, my view is if it's relevant they should learn it....so if they're describing an orange lion or whatever I think that's relevant because there's no point in teaching them that to then go to secondary year and be taught 'oh no, you've been saying it wrong' so I think that's important. But I don't think you necessarily want a separate lesson on grammar...I don't know that for me it would be the end of the world if they did it wrong but if they wrote a sentence and they put the adjective and the noun the wrong way round you might remind them but I don't think I'd be especially worried that they didn't have the grammar in there because I think that could make children nervous. If they're constantly told that's not correct they're not going to want to have a go...

(TR13)...it's not that it's not important I just think - I don't know, for me it wouldn't be like the be all and end all. If I know what they're trying to say and they've had a go I think that's okay. ...it's that thing about the confidence to actually be brave and try and make a sentence in another language ...there's so many things you could pick up that are wrong, it could be demotivating. ...

Data Extract 5.32 Episode 2 Programme Block 6

The identification of the **helping** and **opposing** forces in this programme block is less straightforward and this reveals some inconsistencies in Holly's narrative with regards to her views about the place of grammar. At the outset of this extract the helping force is identified as Holly's understanding of the importance of syntax as a means of enabling children to communicate (Wesche and Skehan, 2002; Macaro, 2014). It quickly becomes apparent, however, that a focus on this is perceived to be a barrier (opponent) to the very communication she feels that grammar will support. Specifically, she acknowledges the less than positive associations learners can form in relation to the grammatical element of their language learning experience. Unlike Jones and Coffey (2013) and Hood and Tobutt (2015), however, she does not recognise that this negativity may stem not from grammar itself per se but rather from inappropriate approaches to teaching it. This data extract exemplifies how Holly is not always presenting a finished, complete narrative. Instead, the way in which the actantial analysis reveals shifts and contradictions in her narrative exposes the more exploratory nature of her reflections as she seeks to wrestle with new ideas.

The focus of Holly's narrative now changes from her more theoretically framed beliefs to a reflection on her experience of PFLs thus far in school. Programme Block 11 (see Data Extract 5.33), for example, is dominated by Holly's desire to be able to teach PFLs in the classroom (the **object**). Within this section, Holly does not explicitly acknowledge the motivating factor for this desire and therefore at this point this cannot be identified with any confidence.

(TR23) I think *languages gets dropped off the timetable because* there's a lot that's got to get done in schools... I think languages, music, drama, those kind of subjects are seen as less important. ...I think if there's one you particularly don't like say maybe if you don't speak languages or ...you don't like singing, maybe that's where you're most likely to kind of shove it off the timetable...

(TR24) I think it might be different now it's compulsory. I think for Key Stage 2 I think it might step it up a little bit. But..if you knocked a couple of French lessons off I think you're not really going to get parents who are outraged at that not happening. Whereas English, maths, definitely, if they weren't done it just wouldn't be acceptable. They're the core subjects so you've got to hit certain targets for that and you've got to spend more time on those.

(TR25) Even in my last school placement the languages co-ordinator didn't really see the importance of it.. it was an outstanding school and it was a very high pressured school. It was very intense. The senior team were very fixated on progress in core subjects so I don't know if it was from that point of view. The teachers were under a lot of pressure I think and French was just one more thing to add to the list of things they had to do. ...

Data Extract 5.33 Episode 2 Programme Block 11

Within this extract Holly considers that the recent compulsory status granted to FLs within the KS2 curriculum might improve the priority with which it is currently viewed in schools. She does not, however, appear completely convinced that the strength of this **helping** function is sufficient to overcome the **opposing** force which she identifies as an over-crowded primary curriculum in which core subjects take priority and '*need to get done*', and which Powell *et al.* (2000) and Driscoll (2014) suggest is a common challenge. The perception that Maths and English are more important than other subjects is not, in her opinion, confined to teachers and school leaders. She judges that parents also hold this view. A lack of teacher confidence and competence with regards to foreign languages is also raised as an additional but related opposing factor. When teachers are forced to make decisions about what they have time to teach, Holly's experience has shown that teachers are less likely to prioritise the subjects they

dislike. This experience would appear to be borne out by research which also found a clear association between a lack of teacher confidence and motivation for FLs and their willingness to teach it (Woolhouse *et al.*, 2013; Legg, 2013; Woodgate-Jones, 2015).

Although Holly has recognised the low status of PFLs in the schools in which she has undertaken her placements, she does go on to describe a foreign languages lesson she was able to observe (see Data Extract 5.34). This lesson exemplifies a feature of what she believes to be good PFL practice raised earlier in her narrative: namely to support children (the **receivers**) to be able to draw on and manipulate their knowledge of the language and language structure in order to become independent users of the FL (the **object** of her desire).

When I saw the French lesson she taught I did actually like the way they did it so it was kind of a shame they didn't do it more because it was actually really good. It was...giving the children the understanding of how to build a sentence ...they'd work in a group, they'd have a big bag of little different words to put in a sentence and they'd pass the bag round... So actually these children haven't just memorised a phrase ... I feel that the children had an understanding, they had that confidence to build because they knew how a sentence is constructed rather than when I was at school it was very much you learned a set phrase and you memorised it and then you used them in your paragraph that you wrote. Whereas I think these children if they did more languages would be more likely to say what they actually want to say... So I think to be speaking it properly and understanding it properly I think it's important that they know how to manipulate the language. It's having the components and then children to go off and do that on their own. As a teacher you need to give them those tools, they can apply it to different situations...

Data Extract 5.34 Episode 2 Programme Block 12

The importance of supporting pupil independence and autonomy as a central tenet of her vision for effective PFLs was not raised at all in response to her module seminars in Episode 1. The opportunity to observe this lesson therefore undoubtedly had a substantial impact on the development of Holly's views about effective PFL pedagogy. This school-based experience can therefore be judged as occupying the **sending** actantial role in this narrative section. In addition, the alternative pedagogic approach modelled in this lesson also acts as the **helping** force through which Holly is able to overcome her prior beliefs about early language learning which stem from her own experience of FL learning (the **opposing** actant). This programme block would appear to add weight to the views of Mutton *et al.* (2010) and Soini *et al.* (2015)

who judge that it is the school-based experiences of trainee teachers which contribute most powerfully to their learning.

In Programme Block 13 (see Data Extract 5.35) Holly's reflections on her placements in school change to focus more on her own confidence and ability to teach PFL lessons successfully (the **object** of Holly's desire). It is inferred that her desire to improve her own understanding and practice occupies the **sending** actantial role and she fulfils the **receiver** role.

(TR28) I was very nervous about teaching those language lessons at the beginning. I'm not a very nervous person in the classroom. I'm like quite happy to get up and get on with it and I still am with French but I think it's because I've just got a GCSE and it was a long time ago and it's that I don't want to make mistakes... Sometimes I think when I say I've done French as my specialist subject I think people expect me to be fluent in French but I will happily admit that my French isn't great. I did well at GCSE but it was a long time ago but I've got the passion for it and I like doing it...

(TR29) I did buy myself a little French revision guide to build my confidence.

Data Extract 5.35 Episode 2 Programme Block 13

Much of this narrative section is dominated by Holly's admission of feeling '*nervous*' about teaching PFLs on her second year placement. She ascribes these feelings to her self-professed lack of subject knowledge, coupled with what she perceives to be the expectations that others may have of her as being a fluent specialist in the language (the **opposing** force in this narrative section). Holly's admission of buying herself a revision guide reveals that improved subject knowledge is the **helping** factor which she believes would support the growth in her confidence as a PFL teacher. It is, perhaps, significant that Holly does not appear to value her own developing beliefs and understanding about PFLs practice but is instead preoccupied by her subject knowledge deficiencies. This would perhaps indicate that she values linguistic competence above pedagogic knowledge. Holly's feelings of self-doubt are echoed in studies which also found a clear correlation between limited linguistic knowledge and diminished teacher confidence in PFLs (Legg, 2013; Woolhouse *et al.*, 2013; Woodgate-Jones, 2015). More notable perhaps is that her lack of confidence appears to be exacerbated by her identity as a PFL 'specialist'. However a study conducted by Barnes (2006) suggests that in this is not an unusual phenomenon.

The concluding stages of Holly's Episode 2 narrative become more future-facing as she looks ahead to her NQT year. She describes how the school where she has secured her first teaching post employs a specialist languages teacher (see Data Extract 5.36). This staffing arrangement acts as the sending actant, motivating her to consider how she might still be able to teach FLs (the **object** of her desire). Holly's understanding of how to embed languages in the daily life of her classroom and her commitment to being involved in the children's foreign language learning provide the **helping** actantial forces. Holly hopes this will help her to at least in part, overcome the school's decision to employ a specialist language teacher which acts as the principal **opponent** and which would otherwise preclude her teaching FLs to her class.

(TR31) The school where I will be working next year as an NQT already have a teacher that teaches French, I was like aww [laughs]. But then I very much wanted to be in a kind of classroom where we just drop a little bit of French in here and we do the register in a different language and I'd still want to know what the children were learning... So although I won't be teaching languages hopefully I'll still involve it in my classroom.

Data Extract 5.36 Episode 2 Programme Block 15

When reflecting specifically on her motivation for teaching foreign languages (the **sending** actant), Holly overtly identifies that this stems from her understanding of the wider benefits of FL learning for the children (who are now, once again, repositioned as the **receivers**). Although this understanding can be judged as occupying the **helping** function which strengthens her resolve to achieve her goal, Holly articulates these benefits mostly in rather broad terms (see Data Extract 5.37). She does, however, most specifically consider the interactive nature of PFL pedagogy as standing in welcome opposition to what she judges to be the more formal and less engaging aspects of the children's learning experiences in the core subjects. This view, according to Cable *et al.* (2010), is not unusual with many teachers in their study appearing to justify a pedagogy focused on pupil enjoyment on the grounds that such an approach is a welcome antidote to the higher stakes learning expected in much of the rest of the curriculum.

(TR32) I think my motivation for teaching languages to children and to make sure it happens in my classroom is just the fact that because I love languages so much I do really see the benefit of children learning it...they might find French is something they're really good at and they really like it because a lot of it will start with a more interactive style lesson which for some children it really suits a lot more I think rather than English and maths is sitting at our desks and some children they really hate that.

Data Extract 5.37 Episode 2 Programme Block 16

Episode 2 of Holly's narrative concludes as she reflects on the key challenge she anticipates that she will have to face in her NQT year in relation to being able to teach PFLs (this remains the **object** of her desire). Her '*passion*' for teaching languages is recognised as the **sending** actantial role, and the **receiver**, though not overtly identified, can be inferred as both herself and the children in her class. Holly judges that the unwavering focus on teaching English and Maths, which does not appear uncommon in primary schools in England (Tinsley and Board, 2017), poses the principal **opposing** force to her being in a position to be able to achieve her goal. The way that the curriculum is organised and timetabled, however, in that PFLs has a 'designated slot' is perceived as a **helping** influence. Holly believes that this will serve to ensure languages are taught regularly.

It is perhaps of consequence that Holly identifies contextual factors as being the primary helping force in this final programme block rather than her own pedagogic understanding or commitment to FLs (see Data Extract 5.38). This would seem to indicate that the extent to which she feels empowered to align her teaching with her own beliefs is bounded by her understanding of the social context in which she will be working (Oolbakkink-Marchand, 2017).

(TR33) But I think the key challenges will be time issues. I mean as much as I am really passionate about teaching languages, English and maths are still at the forefront of your mind aren't they ...It's [PFLs] still not always going to be the number one priority for you in your classroom. I think it will help me in my job that they do actually have a designated slot so that will be quite good I think.

Data Extract 5.38 Episode 2 Programme Block 17

In attempting to examine the way in which the underlying actantial forces shape Holly's Episode 2 narrative it becomes clear that there is some lack of consistency. Although Holly's PFL specialism modules, which have challenged her thinking and presented an alternative pedagogic approach, are overwhelmingly identified as the **sending** actant, analysis of that which occupies her **object** of desire appears to expose a clear divergence in her narrative. With regards to her more theoretically framed vision for PFLs, Holly raises multiple principles as being of importance to her, identifying issues such as providing a purpose and context for language learning, supporting children in using the language and communicating with some degree of autonomy and the value of developing children's intercultural understanding. Holly's

narrative when reflecting back on her school experiences to date and forward to her NQT year is, however, much more pragmatic in nature. In this regard her goal becomes simply to be able to teach the FL to her class and much less to do with applying the vision and principles to which she aspires in her practice. These inconsistencies therefore reveal a general disconnect between the theoretical knowledge and beliefs Holly has acquired during her training and the extent to which she enacts these in the classroom. This disconnect and erosion of ideology is not uncommon for beginning teachers but is reflected in other studies which sought to capture the experiences of pre-service teachers as they enter the profession (Moore *et al.*, 2002; Kane, 2007; Priestley *et al.*, 2012).

Diverse and wide-ranging factors are identified as occupying the **helping** actantial force throughout episode 2. Nonetheless it would appear that Holly's theoretical pedagogic knowledge resulting from her taught modules is most commonly identified as enabling her to articulate her vision for PFLs. Holly's own prior language learning experiences, however, which were at odds with her newly developing pedagogic beliefs, can be considered to contribute to the **opposing** force in her second episode narrative. This, coupled with the standards driven agenda in school, which resulted in less priority being given to FLs in the school contexts she experienced, acted as barriers to Holly being able to develop a sufficient depth of understanding. Moreover, this low subject status limited the opportunities Holly had to observe and to enact her vision for PFLs in the classroom and resulted in what appears to be her inability to fuse theory with her own practice. This difficulty was recognised by Macrory and McLachlan (2009), whose own research highlighted similar challenges for their trainee participants.

An additional opposing force appears to be Holly's preoccupation with her perceived lack of subject knowledge. Although this was not raised in her patchwork reflections in Episode 1, it does begin to emerge in this narrative episode. In particular 'just' possessing a GCSE in French (Programme Block 13) seems to inhibit her levels of confidence in being willing to teach FLs despite her self-professed love of FLs and her desire to do so. Holly admits to feeling nervous about making mistakes and, in particular, the notion of being perceived as an '*expert*' by her colleagues is a very real fear for her (Programme Block 13). In this regard, one could perhaps argue that Holly's engagement in the PFL specialism module could be perceived, at least to some extent, as disempowering her in her quest for teaching PFLs in school as the status she

holds of foreign language specialist is misaligned with how she perceives herself in relation to her level of subject knowledge in particular.

Although Holly and her learners can both be considered as occupying the **receiving** actantial role throughout the episode (as is consistent with Episode 1), the children are beginning to emerge more consistently as the beneficiaries. This is particularly so within the context of Holly's reflections on her vision for effective PFLs practice. This may suggest that Holly's theoretical understanding about PFL pedagogy is sufficiently secure to enable her to place the focus more on the development of children's learning than her own.

5.2.3 Episode 3

This third and final episode of Holly's narrative takes place towards the end of her NQT year, during which she has been teaching a year 3 class. Holly begins her narrative by providing an overview of the FL teaching in the school and the changes in staffing and resultant organisational changes which occurred over the course of the year (see Data Extract 5.39). Holly's knowledge of the way in which the school organised the teaching of PFLs acts as the **sending** force, motivating her to ensure that, whilst she would not be responsible for teaching the PFL lessons, that she was able to share a role in the children's language learning experiences to some extent (the **object** of her desire). Holly is thus positioned as the primary **receiver** of the benefit.

(TR1-2) I am now teaching a Year 3 class in a Junior School . When I came in September, class teachers didn't do their own language teaching. We had a specific languages teacher, not a native speaker, but a woman who just did the languages for each year group, and she did it during PPA. But then she left, maybe at Christmas. She left, and they haven't brought in somebody else who does the languages. But there is a woman in Year 3 who has a languages degree, so she now does the languages for all five classes...because although I have a GCSE, she has a languages degree, it did make more sense for her to do it. ... It would have been nice to teach languages though.

So I do feel like, yes, I am quite out of the loop on languages now. I always try and talk to my children about what they've done in languages, and during the register and things we will do different languages ... But yes, but in terms of what I hoped I might have been doing, it has been quite different. (TR3).I'd like for it to have happened more, really.

Data Extract 5.39 Episode 3 Programme Block 1

Holly's love of the subject and desire to teach it, coupled with her pedagogic understanding of how the FL might be integrated into the daily life of her classroom, are the potential **helping** forces in this narrative section. However, as raised towards the end of Episode 2 of her narrative, Holly's perceived lack of subject knowledge and confidence are overtly identified as **opposing** forces. Lack of teacher subject knowledge and the barrier this creates to the successful implementation of FLs in the primary sector is highlighted by numerous studies (Barton *et al.*, 2009; Enever and Watts, 2009; Wade and Marshall, 2009; Legg, 2013; Woolhouse *et al.*, 2013; Woodgate-Jones, 2015) and would certainly seem significant for Holly within this narrative extract. This is exemplified in her description of how she relinquished the potential opportunity (which arose out of a staffing change) to teach French to another teacher in her year group whom she perceived had more linguistic expertise. The opposing force is thus seen as stronger than the helping force and Holly remains almost completely disjoined from the object of her desire. A lack of coherence with Episode 2 is thus revealed. Previously Holly had articulated her desire to teach PFLs as her primary goal and explicitly identified the school's decision to employ a specialist languages teacher as a considerable barrier to this. Here, despite the potential opportunity she had to teach French, she appeared to willingly hand responsibility for this aspect of the curriculum over to the staff member with the greatest linguistic knowledge.

Holly continues to describe the way in which PFLs is taught in her school context as far as she understands it to be (see Data Extract 5.40). The loss of the school's specialist languages teacher, Holly's understanding of the extent to which other year groups are now teaching the subject, and the nature of this teaching act as the **sending** force in this section. This prompts the **object** of her desire which is to see PFLs taught more consistently across the school. Holly judges that having a designated FL teacher for the school supports a consistency of approach and safeguards the position of PFL lessons on the weekly timetable. As such this can be regarded as the principal **helper** in the potential achievement of the object and, conversely, the loss of the school's language specialist can be considered as the **opposing** force. Holly also once again raises a lack of subject knowledge, this time in relation to her colleagues, as an additional barrier in being able to adequately fill the void of language lessons left by the staffing change.

(TR5) In theory *French gets taught to the other year groups, 4, 5 and 6* but I don't think it really does get done a lot. A lot of them have gone for like a computer software scheme, so if it does get done, it is that the children are going to the ICT suite... I think it's now become one of those things that just gets dropped off if there's not time. Whereas before when we were covered by the other teacher for our PPA, it was happening, still not as often as it should have done, but it was happening regularly because it would be in a PPA slot.

(TR6)... There's no-one who has confidently stepped up in the other year groups and said, "Oh yes, I'll do it." I think that's why they went for software.

Data Extract 5.40 Episode 3 Programme Block 3

The following section of Holly's narrative sees her reflecting on potential options for her for next year in terms of assuming a subject leader role (see Data Extract 5.41). Changes in staffing have prompted opportunities for Holly as she enters her second year of teaching and this therefore acts as the **sending** force, motivating her desire to take on a subject leader role with confidence (the **object**). Holly is thus clearly positioned as the **receiver** of the benefit. Holly's lack of experience and the scale of the work involved in trying to establish a low-status subject '*from scratch*' feels overwhelming for Holly and is consequently accorded with the position of **opposing** function and is perceived to be a serious threat to the achievement of Holly's object of desire. Taking over a subject which is already well established with planning in place is, on the other hand, the explicitly identified **helping** force.

(TR5) I don't think *we have a foreign languages coordinator at the moment...*(TR7) ...but they need someone to do DT, so there's the potential that I might be doing DT. ...To be honest, I don't obviously know an awful lot about what being a coordinator involves. Obviously I know we did the module at university, but I haven't had any actual experience of what that is like. ...All I know is that she promised me it's [DT] really well organised... So she promised me that it's left in a really nice state if I take over DT. My worry with taking over languages would be I'd have to completely start from scratch, because I don't think there would be an awful lot in place. I think I'd have quite a hard task on my hands, especially because people aren't really doing it.

Data Extract 5.41 Episode 3 Programme Block 4

In Episode 1 of her narrative Holly had also expressed some apprehension in relation to adopting a PFL subject leader role; however, this anxiety had stemmed from a sense of 'noviceness' as a beginning teacher. In this regard she had recognised the value of working collaboratively with her more experienced colleagues as a means of overcoming her own lack

of experience. Although more than a year later she recalls undertaking her leadership and management module for PFLs at university, she does not draw on this learning to support her. One might infer from the last sentence in this programme block, *'people aren't really doing it'*, that perhaps she questions whether in reality her colleagues have either the expertise or the willingness to adopt a supporting role for her.

Although Holly seems reluctant to take on the role of PFL subject leader, she does go on to consider what she would like to see in terms of the development PFL teaching and learning at her school (see Data Extract 5.42). Holly describes her desire to establish a more coherent curriculum which ensures pupil progress (the **object**). The children are therefore placed as the **receivers** in this programme block. This is, however, the first instance that pupils making progress in their FL learning has been raised as being of importance to her. This is motivated by her perception of the current approach to PFLs across the school which is inconsistent with the pedagogic beliefs she developed at university (the **sender**).

(TR8) ... I'd like it to be a more whole school approach so that there's consistency from 3 to 6. Because if everyone's doing their own thing, how do you know you're not ending up repeating what they've already done... So I'd like it to be a more of a, like with all other subjects, you do something in Year 3, and then you build on it on it in 4, and then you build on it again -to the point that you're progressing upwards. I don't really like the computer software idea. Obviously I can understand why people have gone for it but...it's not going to offer a lot of opportunity for expanding their [the children's] knowledge and skills.

Data Extract 5.42 Episode 3 Programme Block 5

Analysis of Episodes 1 and 2 reveals that the pedagogic understanding Holly developed through her university-based modules often acted as the principal helping force. In this narrative extract, however, it is her experience and understanding of how other subjects are taught in her school and the expectation that lessons build on the children's prior learning that can be regarded as fulfilling the **helping** actantial role. This, Holly judges, would have the potential to overcome the more ad hoc current school practices (the **opposing** force) which do little to support the development of the children's knowledge and skills but which research suggests and Holly alludes have been adopted due to a lack of staff confidence in teaching languages (Driscoll, 2014; Johnstone, 2014).

The programme block which follows in Holly's narrative (see Data Extract 5.43) sees her exploring specifically what she perceives to mean by progress in early foreign language learning (which remains the **object** of her desire). Again, the **sending** actantial role does not appear to stem from her pedagogic beliefs developed at university. Rather it is inferred as being the dissonance between the PFL practice currently adopted in her school and her understanding of good pedagogy in other subjects. This motivates her to want to see a change in practice. Holly draws on her experience of teaching English (the **helping** force in this narrative section) as a means of trying to exemplify what progress might look like in the FL. Although she raises the importance of children (the **receivers**) being able to move from word to sentence-level and identifies that an understanding of grammar is important in supporting this, her narrative lacks some specificity about how this might be taught. Consequently, it can perhaps be conjectured that Holly's limited experience of observing and teaching FLs in the classroom has hindering her depth of understanding (the **opposing** actant) as such experiences are deemed to be necessary for adequately preparing trainees for the classroom (Mutton *et al.*, 2010; Soini *et al.*, 2015). The distance her NQT year has created from her PFL specialism modules could be judged as creating an additional barrier in that she is no longer looking to this as a means of supporting her practice. Instead the realities of her own school context appear to have emerged as being of more significance over the course of her NQT year.

(TR9) I think I would like to see progress which is sort of similar to in English, in terms of a lot of sentence work. So in Year 3 if you're just looking at beginning to write sentences and phrases and starting to build on it, by 6 they can write whole texts using, you know, things like we talk about in English, using a variety of adjectives, being able to use different sentence starters...their writing should improve through being able to add additional details to their sentences so like using conjunctions... And I think a more of a focus on grammar as they get older as well. In 3 I'm not sure I'd be overly worried about them getting masculine and feminine and all those kinds of things right. But by 6 you'd hope that actually they have an understanding of what a masculine word is, a feminine world, word order, agreements, those kinds of things.

Data Extract 5.43 Episode 3 Programme Block 6

As Holly's narrative continues, she remains preoccupied with describing how she would like to see FL provision develop in her school (see Data Extract 5.44). Here we do see her return to an aspect of her vision which emerged to some extent in her narrative in Episode 2, namely her desire for children (the beneficiaries or **receivers**) to be able to use the FL flexibly and with increasing independence (the **object** of her desire). The FL lesson she observed on her school placement whilst at university, which provided her with a model for an alternative pedagogic

approach, appears as the **sending** actant, motivating her to re-enact these opportunities for the children in her class. The fact that Holly returns to this lesson in her reflections a year later indicates how important this experience was for her.

(TR10) I think you can't say they're competent in the language if all they can do is reel off phrases that are stuck in their head. You want them to be able to have a sentence and be able to adapt it, and that is something I saw in my last school practice that was really good. They would make a sentence altogether with cards, and they would choose a noun, an adjective, put it in, and then they would swap it out for another one... I quite liked that, because it felt a bit more - I don't know, they could pick it up and apply it. They were thinking. .. I thought that was a more independent approach to it, really. So, not just stock phrases, or a list of colours.

Data Extract 5.44 Episode 3 Programme Block 7

The pedagogic understanding Holly has acquired as a result of this classroom based experience and the raised expectations she now has for what children are able to achieve acts as the **helping** force in her narrative. This provides her with a means by which she is able to perceive an alternative approach to her school's current PFL provision (the **opposing** force) as described in the previous programme blocks. This narrative section once again raises the potential value of trainees having the opportunity to observe good models of teaching as a means of connecting theory and practice and developing powerful visions of effective teaching which will, in turn, guide their future actions (Feiman-Nemser, 2001).

Although it is evident that Holly has a vision for effective PFL teaching and learning, she is also acutely aware of the barriers to her being able to establish this in her school context.

Consistent with Programme Block 8, Data Extract 5.45 presents current PFL provision in her school which is in conflict with her own beliefs. This acts as the **sending** actant motivating her to seek an alternative approach (the **object** of this narrative section). Lack of staff confidence and willingness to take ownership of the FL teaching in their classrooms is identified by Holly as the **opposing** force. In response to the loss of the school's language specialist teacher, she suggests that investing in a published scheme of work would provide a level of consistency, support, and direction for teachers which is currently absent. Whilst this is identified by Holly as a potential **helping** force, it does also appear to reveal an additional **opponent**; that is her own levels of self-doubt and inability to see herself as a valuable resource who could help shape PFL provision in her school. This lack of confidence appears in previous programme blocks to stem from her inexperience as a teacher and her perceived lack of subject

knowledge. The scale of the challenge ahead and, in particular the prospect of having to get staff on-board and to change their practices, is too daunting for Holly.

(TR12) The key things that would stand in the way of making all of this happen would be the fact that we're all doing different things at the moment.... I think obviously a lot of people are used to somebody else coming in and doing languages for them, so then to suddenly say to someone, "Well now you've got to do it yourself." ... I think that could be probably the biggest challenge I would face would just be the fact that now I'm trying to give them something else to do... I've then got to, all of a sudden, decide what we're going to do that follows on for all of us. That's going to be quite a big job when there's nothing already in place...

(TR13) ... Even if we did a scheme it would still be better, I feel, than the computer software. So teachers would at least be teaching. And often with schemes you get CDs, don't you. Either the teachers can play it...to the children, and the children copy that, it would still be better, I think, than potentially what they've got at the minute. To be honest, I think if something did happen, I think it would be a scheme that would happen initially, I think, just to get everyone on the same page...When we're all in such a mess - It's so different from how I thought it might be, like when we were all at Uni ...

Data Extract 5.45 Episode 3 Programme Block 9

This section of Holly's narrative reflects the tension which can exist between the personal goals of beginning teachers and the constraints they can be faced with in school as they enter the profession. This conflict, exposed in numerous studies, often leads to the feelings of self-doubt Holly is experiencing here (Brouwer and Korthagen, 2005; Loughran, 2007; Allen, 2009; Menter *et al.*, 2012).

Holly's narrative returns once again to her vision for effective PFL practice. Data Extract 5.46 provides an amplification of her view about the importance of ensuring that children (the **receivers**) make progress in their language learning (the **object** of her desire). It has been established that this **object** has emerged only since embarking on her NQT year, and in this extract Holly reflects for the first time on the origins of this belief. In particular she connects her experience in school, which appears to prioritise being able to demonstrate progress in pupil learning in core subjects (occupying the **sending** actantial role), with her view that this is equally important in children's language learning.

(TR14) ...If you think about what people consider the important subjects, you would want to know that across a year, or a term, or whatever, your child has moved from here to here... You would expect that a child in Year 6 and a child in Year 3 should be significantly different, as you would with English or Maths, that they should be significantly different in what they can do with their languages. ..

(TR15) *It's important for the children to see they've made progress as well.* I mean, even when I did my dissertation research and we were getting the children to do a piece of writing, they were so shocked and impressed that they had managed to write a paragraph in French...I don't think many children are that confident necessarily, particularly with the writing. I think it is important that they can look at something and go, "I've managed to produce this now...I've done it".

Data Extract 5.46 Episode 3 Programme Block 10

Holly's prior experience of teaching FLs for her research project at university fulfils the **helping** actantial force, supporting her understanding of what is possible for children to achieve. She judges, however, that the pupils' own lack of confidence in their language learning abilities, perhaps stemming from a pedagogic approach and curriculum which does not support pupil progress, is a conceivable **opponent** which must be overcome.

Although Holly has explicitly sought to ensure the progression of pupils' learning, she then immediately goes on to acknowledge the low status of PFLs in her school and the barrier this creates to achieving this (see Data Extract 5.47). Holly's school context, where FLs commands less priority than other subjects occupies the **sending** role and results in Holly lowering her aspirations. Her **object** of desire (merely to teach PFLs) thus becomes more pragmatic. Holly identifies pressures on curriculum time and teachers having to prioritise subjects which are deemed to be more important (Powell *et al.*, 2000; Driscoll, 2014; Tinsley and Board, 2017) as the central **opponents** to achieving her object. Despite Crichton and Templeton (2010) judging that a lack of teacher confidence in FLs can lead to complete avoidance or even open hostility towards this aspect of the curriculum, Holly judges that the teachers in her school do, in fact, endeavour to provide a broad and balanced curriculum for their learners despite their lack of linguistic ability. She does, however, acknowledge that this **helping** actant is weak compared with the strength of the opposing force.

(TR16) There is a big focus on their topic books... We're expecting them to be at the same standard as their English book, so there's a real big drive in getting a lot of writing into those. So progress is obviously valued from that side. But I wouldn't be able to hand on heart say that no it's [French] not going to get dropped off the timetable. I mean, it's not that there's not a focus on other subjects – there is. The teachers here really try but things like music, all the typical subjects that you see not always being given the right amount of time in schools, I would say we're maybe not any different. I don't think it's about teachers not valuing languages, I think it is just time...We need to do, obviously English and Maths ...

Data Extract 5.47 Episode 3 Programme Block 11

In the penultimate programme block of Holly's narrative, she returns to reflecting on her reluctance to take on the subject leadership of PFLs in her school (see Data Extract 5.48). It would seem that Holly feels that she possesses sufficient confidence and pedagogic knowledge (the **helping** forces) to teach French to her own class (the **object** of her desire), and indeed to even take responsibility for teaching it across her own year group. She does, however, once more express an overwhelming concern that by admitting to holding any language skills, and by being seen to teach it in her own class, she will be perceived by her colleagues as an '*expert*' in the subject. This is not aligned with her own perceived lack of linguistic knowledge. Here, again, where we get to the root of Holly's lack of confidence (the **opposing** force), which she admits puts the achievement of her object of desire at risk.

(TR20) I love languages, and I would really like to do it with my class in the afternoon, but it's going to be very much an all or nothing situation. If I want to do it with my class in the afternoon, I think I could end up doing it, like, sorting it for everyone - and that's scary, do you know what I mean? I would really like to do it with my class but I don't think I would necessarily want to take on the responsibility by myself for everybody's planning, what they are doing, that does scare me. And almost in some ways, I guess would say puts me off a little bit, because I think it would be such a big responsibility, and I don't want to... Having said that, I could end up in a position where I do it for Year 3 next year, because obviously there isn't anyone now. And that wouldn't be so bad, if I was doing the rotation of lessons. That would be okay, I wouldn't mind doing that.

(TR21) I do only have a GCSE in French. I love it, but I'm not an expert... I'm nowhere near a fluent, competent speaker. I just really like it. So I think that's my other thing, I don't want to step in and say, "Oh yes, I'll do languages." And people assume that that means I'm some kind of fluent speaker, when actually I'm not the expert they might assume I am...

Data Extract 5.48 Episode 3 Programme Block 14

Although some studies suggest that there is no wholesale correlation between a teacher's subject knowledge and their effectiveness in the classroom (Burstall *et al.*, 1974; Medwell *et al.*, 1998), Holly certainly seems to place great importance on possessing a strong linguistic base as a prerequisite for being able to influence and support the development of PFLs more widely across the school. Shulman (1986) and Poulson (2001), while not completely disregarding the importance of teacher subject knowledge, consider a fusion of this and pedagogic knowledge to be more effective in supporting learning. It is interesting, however, that despite Holly's narrative revealing her desire to develop her knowledge and beliefs about effective PFL practice over the course of her training, this knowledge appears to have done little to empower her to take a lead in influencing curriculum and pedagogic change.

As Holly's concludes her narrative, the children remain the primary **receivers** (see Data Extract 5.49). Holly's understanding and appreciation of the benefits of FL learning for children and the enjoyment this can provide for them acts as the **sending** force, motivating her to want to teach FLs (the **object** of her desire). Her own learning, including her university specialism modules, which kindled a love of languages, acts as the **helping** force. The reality of teaching, however, and in particular a lack of time and the priority given to the core subjects, is identified as the **opposing** force which must be overcome.

(TR24) *I do still want to teach it because I see the benefit of it for the children... Because I think children do enjoy it when they do it.*

(TR25) *I would say my desire to teach French is not 100% less than when I was at university, but it was very different because I was having language lectures every week, and I wasn't in a school where I already know I run out of time at the end of the day, and where other things have to take priority. You know? It's not that I don't want to do it or I am not committed. But I think it's been overshadowed by other things. ...It's not that my views changed, but I'm not surrounded by it as I was before, especially because I don't even teach it so I don't really think about it as much...*

Data Extract 5.49 Episode 3 Programme Block 15

The disconnect Holly feels between the vision and enthusiasm she developed whilst at university and the actuality of life in school is, according to Veenman (1984), common amongst novice teachers entering the profession. Although Holly expresses an on-going desire to teach FLs, she recognises that PFL is no longer a priority for her as she strives to manage the other demands on her time.

This third and final narrative episode provides evidence of Holly's continued desire to teach PFLs. Her reflections, however, also reveal how this **object** is superseded to some extent by her desire to see the current approach to PFL teaching in her school changed. Specifically, and like many other researchers in the field of PFLs (Tierney and Gallastegi, 2005; McLachlan, 2009; Jones and Coffey, 2013; Hood and Tobutt, 2015), Holly advocates the importance of developing a FLs curriculum which supports and ensures that children make progress in their learning. Although this principle has not been identified prior to this episode, it now emerges as a central tenet of her vision for PFLs. This development may, at least in part, be explained by the distinct change in that which occupies the **sending** narrative function in this third episode. In Episode 2, Holly's specialist subject modules were acknowledged as provoking and challenging her thinking and, consequently, motivating her to consider an alternative pedagogic approach to the one she had experienced herself as a learner. However, in this final episode Zeichner and Tabachnick (1981) would perhaps argue that Holly's university-based learning and developed beliefs have been 'washed out' (p7) by the realities of daily school experience she has faced over the course of her NQT year. Whether or not this is the case, the influence of her specialist modules is certainly all but invisible, and it is instead her direct experience in school which acts as the dominant **sending** force. In particular, Holly acknowledges the rigorous focus on pupil learning in the core subjects which contrasts sharply with the low expectations teachers have of children in their FL lessons.

It is, however, in the analysis of the helping and opposing forces in this final episode that Holly's struggle is truly revealed. The numerous **helping** functions evident in her narrative, in particular her own pedagogic beliefs and understanding, serve an important role in potentially enabling her to successfully achieve her object of desire. The strength, however, of a number of the **opposing** forces in her narrative appear to unfailingly overwhelm these helping factors. The lack of an established curriculum and inconsistent staff practices evident across the school, resulting from the departure of the specialist languages teacher, could be considered as providing Holly with an opportunity to influence and establish language learning opportunities for the children which are more in-line with her own beliefs and vision. Instead, however, these are considered to be overwhelming barriers for her.

Despite her professed commitment to foreign language learning, Holly believes that the act of teaching FLs to her class and of being a visible advocate for the subject is likely to lead to her being perceived as an expert in the language. Holly is preoccupied by her perceived lack of linguistic competence, appearing to view subject knowledge as holding more value than pedagogic understanding. Thus the notion of subject expertise is misaligned with the view she possesses of herself as a teacher of foreign languages. This, in turn, affects her levels of confidence and gives rise to Holly's reluctance to attempt to influence practice beyond her own classroom. Although Holly identifies the contextual constraints she is confronted by, such as lack of time and the dominance of core subjects, it can certainly be argued that it is her perceived lack of subject knowledge which is the most disempowering for her. There are echoes here of McLachlan's (2009:198) warning that a dearth of linguistic expertise amongst beginning teachers potentially jeopardises the extent to which they can be expected to play a part in the 'renaissance' of language learning in any consequential way.

5.2.4 Holly's Story – a Summary

Figure 5.2 provides a summation of the actantial shifts which were revealed in the analysis of Holly's narrative over the course of this study. Some parallels can be drawn with Isla's narrative; in particular, the increasing influence of Holly's school-based experiences (the sending force), and the perceived low status of PFLs which was judged to be a barrier to the teaching of this curriculum subject.

Holly's narrative particularly serves to exemplify the important relationship that exists between the helping and opposing actantial forces, in that the comparative strengths of these actants ultimately determine the success or failure of the subject's attainment of their object of desire. Over the course of her training, Holly developed the pedagogic understanding and beliefs necessary to positively influence the provision of PFLs in her school. The lack of coherent PFL curriculum and, more notably, her self-confessed lack of confidence in her own subject knowledge, however, overwhelmed these helping forces. This resulted not only in Holly remaining disjoined from her objects of desire, but arguably led to a weakening of her commitment to achieve them at all.

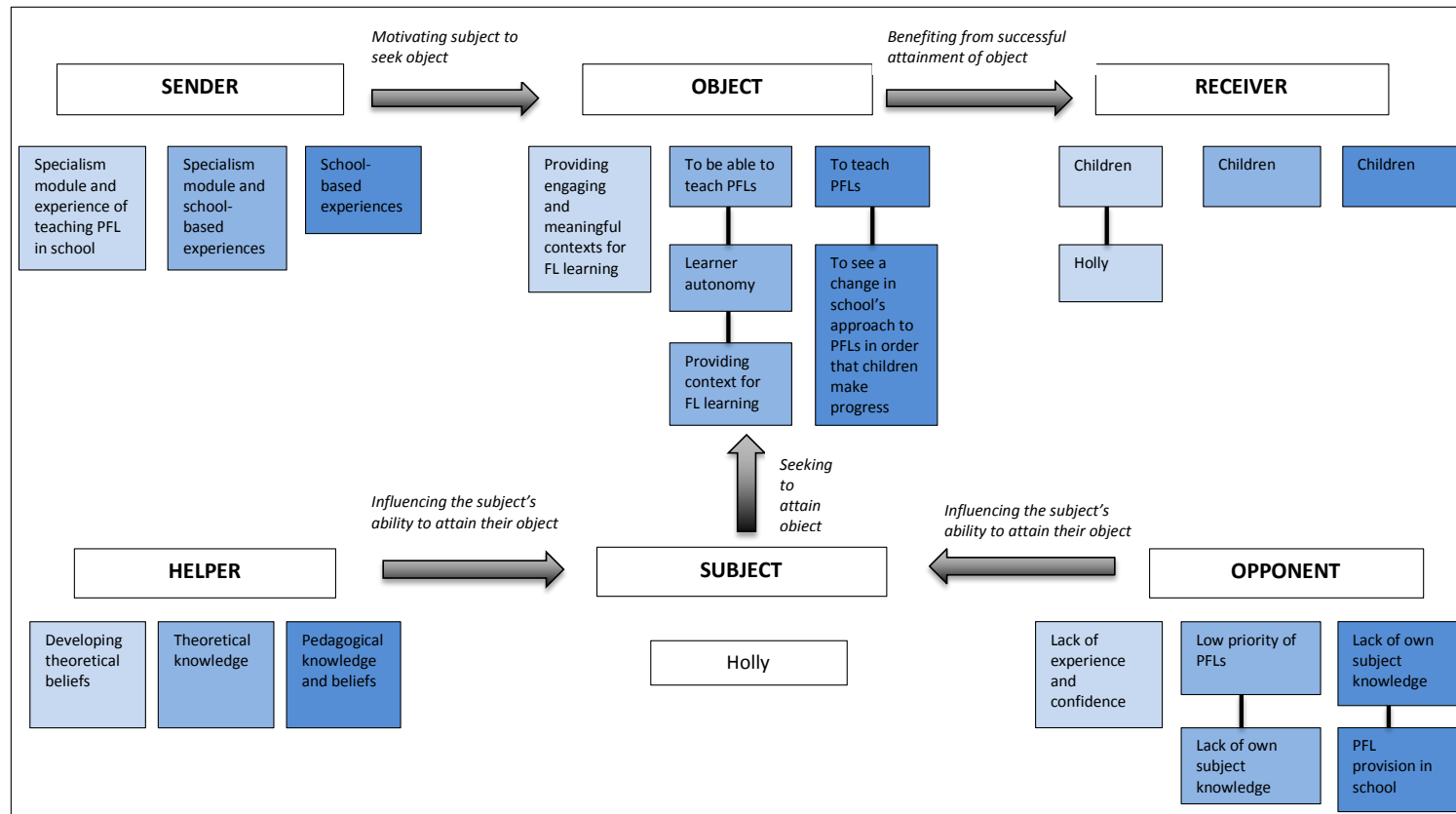


Figure 5.2 Summary of actantial shifts in Holly's narrative

5.3 Eleanor's story

Eleanor was 21 years old when she began her undergraduate teacher training course. She was awarded a GCSE in French and Spanish and also successfully pursued French to A level.

Eleanor's parents live in Geneva so she is provided with regular opportunities to use her French when she returns to visit them.

5.3.1 Episode 1

Eleanor begins her narrative by responding to her first module seminar (see Data Extract 5.50).

The content of this seminar prompts her to recall her own foreign language learning which consisted primarily of rote learning of nouns. The research she has engaged with in the seminar acts as the **sending** actant, prompting her to consider an alternative approach to teaching languages to young learners. In particular she identifies the **object** of her desire as needing to provide children with more challenging language learning experiences. This desire echoes the views of Hunt (2009) who contends that children need to be provided with opportunities to extend their linguistic skills and apply the language they are learning.

(TR2) I found the first session back provoked thoughts about the way in which French is taught and what is taught in primary schools. It reminded me how I was first taught French 10 years ago, with rote learning of nouns (colours, animals and objects in a pencil case)...It seems that all too often children are taught nouns but not how to put them into a sentence ... Martin (2012) points out that children are not being challenged during French like they are in other subjects and perhaps this is because teachers find it more of a challenge to teach in the first place. With excessive repetition and the overuse of games and songs it's no wonder children aren't feeling challenged.

... It also appears there needs to be a larger emphasis on writing within languages, as there is such a large focus on speaking and listening already (Martin, 2012:7). Being able to write in a different language is important as it ...also allows children to relate sounds they have learnt to letters on the page just like they do within literacy...

Data Extract 5.50 Episode 1 Programme Block 1

Eleanor's developing understanding of a pedagogic approach which is more in line with other curriculum subjects is considered to be the **helping** actant. In particular she contends that lessons which reflect a balance of oracy and literacy and higher expectations of pupils have the potential to overcome the **opposing** force in the narrative, namely the excessive repetition of language and the overuse of games which research suggests is more prevalent in the primary sector and which she experienced as a learner (Watzke, 2007; Cable *et al.*, 2010; Hood and Tobutt, 2015). Eleanor suggests that such teaching approaches stem from a lack of teacher

subject knowledge. This view is also aligned with a number of studies which highlight the importance of teachers' linguistic skills in enabling children to become successful users of the FL (Legg, 2013; Woolhouse *et al.*, 2013; Johnstone, 2014). The primary **receiver** in this extract is explicitly identified as the children. However it can be argued that Eleanor is also a beneficiary as she develops her thinking and beliefs about effective FL learning and teaching.

In response to Eleanor's second module seminar, she continues to articulate her developing thinking in relation to PFL practice (see Data Extract 5.51). On first reading it would appear that ensuring that teachers provide opportunities for children to read and write in the FL is Eleanor's primary goal. On closer analysis, however, it becomes clear that her **object** of desire is to support pupils' (identified as the **receivers**) acquisition of the FL in a way which safeguards their enjoyment of their learning. Unlike many primary teachers who associate writing and grammar as substantial barriers to learner engagement (Driscoll, 2014), Eleanor does see a place for these as a means of ensuring pupil progress. Eleanor's developing pedagogic understanding can therefore be regarded as the **helping** force in this narrative extract. She does, however, consider that a focus on linguistic progress poses the potential risk of impacting negatively on the children's levels of motivation (the **opponent**). This belief sits in direct opposition to the views of Tierney and Gallestegi (2005) and Graham (2014) who argue that it is, in fact, the setting of high expectations which leads to pupil success and is consequently a means through which engagement can be created and sustained.

(TR4) I think that it is important to have the same emphasis on reading and writing in a foreign language as there is within speaking because children can get bored with just going over the same method continuously... As Skarbek (1998) noted, reading and writing appear to be labelled as more difficult and less enjoyable, however if we intend for children to learn the grammar of the language, these elements need to be introduced earlier to coincide. Skarbek (1998) points out that most languages are made up of the spoken and written form and both enhance each other...

Biriotti (1999) explains the importance of teaching grammatical acquisition in a way that children do not come away bored...and this is a challenge for teachers...teachers also need to make sure that accuracy is picked up on, at every stage (Biriotti, 1999). However, it is important how the teacher ensures this accuracy as some children may be disheartened if they are told that they're not accurate with pronunciation.

Data Extract 5.51 Episode 1 Programme Block 2

As her narrative continues, the opportunity for Eleanor to take part in a *dérive* is explicitly identified as the **sending** actant, enabling her to reflect on this activity in relation to how it may enhance children's language learning (see Data Extract 5.52). Specifically, this seminar prompts her to consider the need to provide children with engaging opportunities to apply the foreign language in a real context with a degree of independence and autonomy (the **object** of her desire). Her belief in the importance of children applying language was raised in Programme Block 1. The notion of pupil autonomy, which is argued to be essential in preparing pupils for real language use (Littlewood, 1981), has not been raised until this point however.

The opportunity for Eleanor to consider and explore a pedagogic approach which is both play-based and practical is identified as the **helping** force. This understanding of an alternative approach has the potential to overcome the more transmission-style teaching methods which, Eleanor judges, promotes passive learning and thus occupies the **opposing** actantial role. The **receiver** of the benefit remains consistent with the previous two programme blocks.

(TR5) ... It was good to actually experience a derive myself as it gave me the opportunity to reflect. The use of the cards was a good idea as it allows children to put vocabulary they've learnt into context ... A derive could be referred to as a form of play for children ... which can increase the engagement of students...A derive is giving children the independence and opportunity to learn and enjoy what they are doing...rather than just sit in a classroom and be told something (Rice, 2009) ... I think that a derive is a really effective way of learning for children as they have been given a little bit of structure to learn but also freedom to learn for themselves...

Data Extract 5.52 Episode 1 Programme Block 3

The extract which follows (see Data Extract 5.53) reveals the way in which Eleanor has made a personal connection with the content of one of her seminars (the **sending** actant). Her narrative until this point has been framed heavily by the literature she has engaged with. For the first time, however, her reflection is less reliant on this and we get a clearer glimpse of Eleanor's own views about learning and teaching.

(TR6) I have always love storytelling and so I really enjoyed this week's session... Storybooks are engaging and provide a context for children to learn in (Collins, 2013) which is important when teaching something new such as French as we have previously discussed that without a context children can get bored of what they are learning. I enjoyed experiencing the different ways of presenting storytelling through the various creative designs, which is also a good way of engaging children as they are able to create or retell their own stories in their own independent way.

Data Extract 5.53 Episode 1 Programme Block 4

There remains a consistency in the **object** of her desire as she seeks to provide children with an engaging context for the application of their foreign language. The value of supporting pupil independence is also once again identified. Stories (the **helping** force) are identified as a potential context for languages learning which are able to overcome the lack of engagement inferred as being the **opponent** in this extract. The pupils are positioned as the primary **receivers** of the benefit. In addition, Eleanor can also be regarded as a beneficiary as she identifies that the practical nature of the seminar has exemplified for her strategies for using stories with young language learners. The design of this seminar appears to have been successful in supporting Eleanor's understanding of some key principles of PFLs teaching while also connecting this knowledge in a meaningful way to her future practice in the classroom (Putnam and Borko, 2000).

Eleanor's concluding reflection in this first episode of her narrative is in response to her final leadership and management module in the third and final year of her undergraduate programme. This module (the **sending** force) has explored the nature of being a subject leader for PFLs, encouraging trainees to consider the potential challenges inherent in such a role as well as strategies for promoting the subject in their schools. Eleanor explicitly identifies that, as a potential future subject leader, her **object** of desire is to inspire in the children and the teachers (**the receivers**) a love of languages (see Data extract 5.54). Her engagement with the seminars has identified that an approach to subject leadership, which promotes collaboration and colleague engagement (the potential **helping** force), is more likely to support the attainment of her goal than adopting a more authoritarian leadership style where staff are 'told what to do' (the **opponent**).

(TR7) The discussions in the seminar about subject leaders and managers made me think more in depth about...how a subject can be successfully led in terms of bringing teachers together and sharing thoughts and ideas over schemes of work, plans and content, with everyone contributing rather than just being told what to do. I hope that I become this person if I become a subject leader as it will mean that I'm helping pass on a love of languages not just to children but teachers as well.

Data extract 5.54 Episode 1 Programme Block 5

Analysis of the first episode of Eleanor's narrative reveals an overwhelming consistency in many of the actantial roles. The **sending** actant, for example, remains her module seminars in that her engagement with the content of the module and the associated reading has prompted the development of her thinking and beliefs about effective PFL practice. Eleanor begins her narrative reflecting on the importance of teachers providing young children with opportunities to apply the foreign language they are learning (the **object** of her desire). This principle is advanced further over the course of Episode 1 to include a consideration of the value of providing a context for the application of language. This, she judges, will safeguard pupil enjoyment. Eleanor also begins to associate opportunities for learners to be autonomous and independent with an increase in their engagement. Although the object of Eleanor's desire develops over the course of this episode, this development is seen more as a growth than a complete change in the nature of that to which she aspires.

In contrast, the **opposing** force which is revealed in this first episode is more varied, including a lack of teacher subject knowledge, loss of pupil engagement, and teaching approaches which are judged by Eleanor to be inappropriate for young learners. Her developing understanding and beliefs in relation to alternative approaches to teaching FLs to young learners is overwhelmingly identified as the **helping** force which will enable her to overcome these barriers. The potential influence of these beliefs on the future enactment of her practice is supported by Putnam and Borko (2000). Indeed, there are some who argue that the possession of strong pedagogic beliefs is essential in supporting the growth of professional agency and enabling teachers to 'act as a force for change' (Eteläpeltö *et al.*, 2013:46). The development of Eleanor's thinking and beliefs, evidenced throughout each narrative section, can thus be argued as placing her in the role of beneficiary (**receiver**). The children, however,

are also explicitly and consistently identified as benefitting from the successful attainment of Eleanor's goals.

It is important to acknowledge that Eleanor was not presented with the opportunity to teach French on her school placement which immediately followed her second year module. She was, therefore, unable to engage with the patchwork reflections during this period of her training. Priestley *et al.* (2015) suggest that school environments often largely steer the formation of teachers' pedagogic beliefs. The fact that Eleanor's thinking and learning remains, over the course of this first episode, consistently situated within the context of her university-based modules and has not been challenged in any way by other experiences may go some way to explaining why there is such consistency in her narrative.

5.3.2 Episode 2

The second episode of Eleanor's narrative takes place after her final extended school placement and at the end of her final year as an undergraduate trainee teacher (see Data Extract 5.55). She begins her reflection by identifying, once again, the importance of ensuring a balance of oracy and literacy in her PFLs lessons as the **object** of her desire. Eleanor recognises that her university-based specialist module have prompted this desire. Unlike in Episode 1, however, this is not identified as the sole **sending** force. She also goes on to explicitly describe her experiences on her recent school placement. She depicts, for example, the positive responses of the children (the **receivers**) to writing in a foreign language; specifically the act of writing was judged by the children as supporting their learning and levels of confidence (Manchón, 2014). Thus, this school experience can be considered as influencing and reinforcing her beliefs and can be regarded as fulfilling the **sending** actantial role in this extract.

(TR3) ...I'd hope to see a variety of things, not just children learning - the oral, like oracy, not just learning how to say it, but also how to write it, like we did in the module last year. So showing the progression from being able to speak it and to be able to write it. When I was on placement, on the last placement just gone, some children found it easier to be able to write it...They seems to have more confidence in writing than they have in actually saying it out loud...

It's hard because obviously languages within schools, it's very oracy based. And then when it comes to writing it might just be a word, not necessarily like full sentences. I think some teachers ... might not be so confident within their own languages and so might not think that it would help. (TR5)... in the last placement I taught a series of French lessons that were linked to their topics. Their first topic was the Egyptians so I linked it to go to travelling abroad and they're packing their suitcase, and talked about what they would pack in their suitcase. And then the topic after half term was Jungles so we did about walking through a jungle, what we'd, kind of, see. And a lot of teachers came up to me and said, "Wow, how have you managed to teach that? I would never be able to teach that." And you think, well, you could, you've just got to put your mind to it...As long as you know what you're doing and you, kind of, learn what you're going to teach the children.

Data Extract 5.55 Episode 2 Programme Block 1

Towards the end of this more lengthy programme block, Eleanor also describes how she was able to link the children's FL learning to their Egyptian and Jungle topics. This exemplification of her practice reveals an additional narrative object, namely to provide an engaging context for the children's learning. This is also consistent with her object of desire in Episode 1. Eleanor acknowledges the importance of teachers' pedagogic knowledge, coupled with their willingness to develop sufficient subject knowledge. This is judged as being critical in enabling teachers to overcome the excessive focus on oracy, which is currently more widespread in the primary sector (the **opponent**). These factors are identified as the potential **helping** forces in this extract. She is not alone in her views that a fusion of subject knowledge and pedagogic knowledge, or Pedagogic Content Knowledge (Shulman, 1986), is the most influential prerequisite of effective teaching (Medwell *et al.*, 1998; Poulson, 2001; Cable *et al.*, 2010).

The second programme block in Eleanor's narrative sees her continuing to describe her beliefs about effective PFLs and she begins this extract by asserting a need to challenge children in their FL learning (see Data Extract 5.56). The primary **object** of her desire, however, is identified as seeking to provide children, who continue to be the **receivers**, with opportunities to apply their learning in an engaging context. This both amplifies and develops her goal in the previous programme block and remains consistent with Episode 1. The **sending** actant, that

which motivates her desire, is identified explicitly as her university-based module as she provides examples of seminars which have stimulated her thinking. Her narrative in the preceding programme block, however, would also suggest that this desire has been reinforced by her experience in school.

(TR6) I think we should be challenging children, just like with every other subject...I don't think *just teaching them more nouns* is actually learning a language, because you're not learning how to have a conversation. You're learning words, but you're not learning how to have a conversation. Language is being able to string a sentence together rather than just repeat language...

(TR7) But then you've, kind of, got to put that learning in a context where they're going to be able to use those nouns. Teachers need to be able to put them into a context for the children to actually feel that they're learning something that's meaningful.... The children need to be able to understand why they're learning something...It also makes it more engaging for the children, rather than just learning a list of nouns, they understand why they're learning them. They'll be able to put them in, hopefully into a sentence in the future...

(TR8) I think some people think to be creative you have to be completely out there...But I think it can be just little things like using a story book and you can use that to be creative. Like when we went on the *dérive* and when we just went to a wood...where we had the little people or we had to go and find the sticks to make our stick family, that's being creative...I think some teachers get a bit scared, "Oh, I don't want to be too creative because there's too much effort that has to go in to it."

Data Extract 5.56 Episode 2 Programme Block 2

Eleanor's developed pedagogic understanding and beliefs can be judged as fulfilling the **helping** force while a reluctance by teachers, due to the perceived effort necessary to create such opportunities for children, has been identified by Eleanor as the **opponent**.

Eleanor continues to describe her thinking in relation to early FL learning and teaching. In this extract she raises the importance of teaching intercultural understanding (IU) as the **object** of her desire (see Data Extract 5.57). She does not, however, go on to elaborate on why she believes this to be the case, nor does she make any attempt to define what she means by the notion of 'culture'. As this extract develops, it emerges that it is not simply the teaching of IU that Eleanor deems to be of importance, but rather the need to link this aspect of the children's learning to other areas of the curriculum. One can perhaps infer that this desire stems from her belief, as raised on numerous previous occasions throughout her narrative, in

the importance of contextualising learning for the children (who are positioned again as the **receivers**).

(TR12) I think my view of intercultural understanding has changed, because at the beginning I had never really thought about it. In my own head it was always...we're going to speak and we're going to listen and we're going to write. And I guess that was maybe my education. But I think I have become more aware through the modules we did that culture is an important aspect of languages and the different ways that that can be implemented within the curriculum. Not just within a French lesson, but within geography, RE or even literacy. This school that I was on placement had said that the term before that their topic was French...so they integrated it into the whole of their curriculum...So art was all about French artists, and things like that, and the history of France. I've not seen that before. But the children when they talked about it, they were so excited to tell me and show me what they'd done...

Data Extract 5.57 Episode 2 Programme Block 4

Eleanor identifies that this aspect of her vision for PFLs originated from her taught modules (the **sending** actant), although this is the first time that this element of language learning has been raised in her reflections as being of importance to her. It is more apparent, however, how her experience in school, and specifically the positive feedback she has received from the children about their work on their France topic, has influenced her views. This experience can consequently be judged as being an additional but significant sending force. Eleanor's developing awareness of how she might successfully integrate and contextualise children's learning about other cultures is the **helping** force in this extract. This is judged as enabling her to overcome her prior experiences of language learning, which did not involve the exploration of other cultures, and the lack of opportunity she has been afforded thus far to observe such an approach (the **opposing** forces).

It is at this point that Eleanor's narrative becomes more introspective (see Data Extract 5.58). She reflects back on the design of her specialism modules in relation to how she feels these have influenced the development of her thinking and learning (the **object** in this narrative section). As a result, the **receiving** actant shifts explicitly from the children to herself. The online patchwork-style reflections, which were integral to the trainees' second year specialism module, were judged as being the principal **helping** force in this section. Eleanor identifies a number of reasons for this. She believes the expectation that she contribute her reflections weekly '*made her*' engage. Having the opportunity to return to her reflections was also judged as being instrumental in her becoming aware of the extent of her learning and to make

connections in her thinking (Ovens, 2003b). She also appears to have appreciated the chance to think about and amend her contributions. This, in conjunction with the collaborative nature of the patchwork approach, was seen as being supportive in helping her to overcome the lack of confidence she felt at times as she '*worried about what to write*' (the **opposing** force). This acknowledgement of her feelings of self-doubt perhaps goes some way to explaining why, in Episode 1, her engagement in the on-line patchwork-style reflections were often so brief and appeared to be heavily dependent on theory with the expression of her own beliefs and thinking rarely coming to the fore. Indeed, Hulme and Hughes (2006) suggest that a dependency on external knowledge as a means of overcoming their lack of classroom experience is common for beginning teachers in the early stages of their training.

(TR13) I think the patchwork module... I found it really useful because it actually made me reflect on each seminar, which at the time I thought, "Oh no, I've got to do this." But yeah, thinking back it was actually really good...And I could link them up and then find the relationships between what we did in, say, the first seminar and the fifth seminar...

I think the online way was good...And sharing as well, you get other people's points of views that you might not have thought about before... sometimes I think, "Oh, I'm a bit stuck on what I think about that" worrying about what to write. And you just look at someone else's and you think, "Yeah, actually that it is what I think, however maybe this as well." So I think it does move your thinking on a lot...

... there's some people that don't feel they have the confidence to say anything, whereas online you can just be honest, you can also delete what you might have said and then go back, and then redo, whatever. And also thinking time. You've got thinking time. And also the literature that you gave us also helped with our patchworks and our own reflections on what we've done in that seminar.

Data Extract 5.58 Episode 2 Programme Block 5

Eleanor continues to consider opportunities over the course of her training to develop her pedagogic understanding (which remains the **object** of her desire). Although she is not overtly negative about her learning whilst at university, she does recognise that it can be considered as decontextualized (see Data Extract 5.59). She suggests that it is only in having the opportunity to apply the more theoretical principles in the classroom, where she is able to '*see what the children's reactions are*', that she is able to connect this theory to practice in any meaningful way (Putnam and Borko, 2000; Hargreaves, 2012). Her experience in school is therefore identified as the fundamental **helping** force which is able to overcome the potential

for university-situated learning to be perceived as disconnected and of less value (the **opponent**).

(TR15) I think *having been in school for my final placement*, it makes it a lot more real...So I think, yeah, in the seminars you're sitting there and you have to do a lot of thinking about, "Oh well, this could happen," whereas when you're on practice you actually see things, you actually see it for real and see what the children's reactions are to the things that we've learnt within the seminar.

Data Extract 5.59 Episode 2 Programme Block 6

Eleanor's reflections on the significance of her experience in school prompts an abrupt shift back to her beliefs about effective PFL pedagogy (see Data Extract 5.60). Like Satchwell (2006), she appears to believe in the importance of children experiencing a sense of achievement in their language learning (the **object** of her desire), and identifies children having opportunities to write as being of central importance in supporting this (the **helping** function). In contrast, she maintains that adopting a predominant focus on oracy is less likely to engender feelings of success (the **opponent**). The children are once again positioned as the beneficiaries (**receivers**) in this narrative section.

(TR16) I think *the writing* gives the children a sense of achievement. It was also like a hard copy of something to take home to their parents or take to their head teacher and say, "Look what I've done, this is what I've learnt in French today..." ... *Whereas if they've taken part in a conversation* they haven't got any evidence that they've actually done it. Although I've seen it and the other children have seen it, there's no evidence for anyone else in the school, there's no evidence for their parents...I think having that written piece of work shows that they have achieved something within their languages that they might not necessarily think that they've achieved within speaking and listening.

Data Extract 5.60 Episode 2 Programme Block 7

Eleanor's deliberations on the significance of writing prompt her to attempt to articulate her understanding of the importance of grammar in early FL learning and to reconcile this with protecting children's levels of engagement (the **object** of this extract). In Episode 1 Programme Block 2, she had identified through her engagement with reading that it was possible, and indeed necessary, to teach grammar in engaging ways in order to support pupils' acquisition of FLs. A year later however, as she completes her training and is about to enter the profession, she appears less certain of both the benefits of grammar and the possibility of teaching it in a

way that children will enjoy (see Data Extract 5.61). Her views are now more aligned with Ytreberg (1997), who also remains unconvinced of the need for an overt focus on the structural aspects of FLs for young learners and also Jones and Coffey (2013) who acknowledge the less than positive associations learners can form in relation to grammar.

(TR17) I think *grammar and being accurate* is important but I think that if you continuously pick up on accuracy and things like that, it can put children off. I think sometimes you've just got to let it slide...

(TR18) I don't know how important *grammar* is at primary because I don't think you see it much. Because it's a hard aspect to teach, I think... I guess it's hard to teach without it getting, like literacy, a bit repetitive and a bit boring, or hard, or whatever. I think *children can communicate* to a degree without an understanding of grammar. But ...there's a point with their speaking that you then need to introduce grammar to make it more fluent. I don't know, it's not really an area that I have thought about. I don't know. I think it's another aspect as well for teachers, when they think, "Oh no, I've got to do grammar," because I find grammar hard, and that's just me.

I think masculine and feminine are quite easy to teach. Well, I found it quite easy because the children...seemed to just get hold of it quite quickly...But verb conjugations and things are harder to teach.

Data Extract 5.61 Episode 2 Programme Block 8

Feiman-Nemser (2001), Mutton *et al.* (2010) and Soini *et al.* (2015) posit that it is having opportunities to observe good models of practice, that reflect the pedagogic approaches advocated by their pre-service course, which contributes most powerfully to the development of trainees' beliefs and practice. Despite having explored the more theoretical aspects of teaching grammar in her specialism module, Eleanor has not had opportunities to see this translated into practice, acknowledging that '*you don't see much of it*' in the primary school. Therefore, while it is her experience in school which prompts a change in her thinking (and acts as the **sending** force in this narrative extract), it is specifically her experience of the teaching of grammar in the context of Literacy rather than PFLs which is significant. She describes grammar in Literacy lessons, for example, as being a bit '*repetitive, boring and hard*' and consequently concludes that this is likely to be the same in FLs.

The perception she now holds that children are likely to find that grammar difficult, and that this will have a negative effect on their levels of engagement and confidence, is considered by Eleanor to be a key **opposing** factor. Children, however, are not seen to be alone in perceiving grammar as challenging. She admits to finding it difficult herself and therefore draws the

conclusion that her colleagues are likely to feel the same way. Lack of subject knowledge is therefore suggested as having a negative impact on teacher attitudes and willingness to teach FLs (Crichton and Templeton, 2010). An additional but notable opponent can be regarded as the lack of opportunity Eleanor has had to observe PFL pedagogy related specifically to exploring grammatical concepts with young children. Conversely, however, it is the opportunity she has had to teach the notion of masculine and feminine to children on her school placement which has indicated that this is achievable. This experience appears to have had a positive impact on her levels of confidence in this area of language teaching and is thus identified as the **helping** force in this section. It could, perhaps, therefore be argued that additional school based opportunities to observe and teach grammar may have served to influence both her pedagogic understanding and her perception of what is attainable with young language learners.

Eleanor now begins to reflect explicitly on her three extended school placement experiences in relation to the extent to which they presented her with opportunities to teach PFLs (the **object** of her desire). It can be inferred from the description of these experiences that she has come to recognise that being able to regularly teach a language is not a given (see Data Extract 5.62). This prompts her to consider what both enables and inhibits the chances of this happening and her school experiences are thus seen as fulfilling the **sending** actantial role.

(TR19) For my second year placement I was in year R, and didn't have a chance to do anything in terms of language teaching at all. On my first year placement though I was in a Year 3 class in a junior school which did French. I did one or two French lessons... All the class teachers taught it...It was very basic, not even conversation but basics like brothers and sisters and pets, and mum and dad. (TR20) But I only saw it a couple of times. It dropped off the timetable, one of those things. And it was in the run up to Christmas, so everything started dropping, all the things that weren't that important...

(TR21) For my final placement I was in a primary school, the one I got a job at...and French was taught nearly every week. They also had a French club...So it was -you could see that languages were in the school. (TR22) During the planning meetings it was always English and maths in the morning, and then in afternoon all the afternoons were free. There'd definitely be two PE sessions and then we would just mix and match what we were going to do... So the afternoons weren't set every week, so I think that's probably a good point because they tried to fit all the foundation subjects into the afternoons... (TR23) The teachers, I think really thought it was important and they could see that the children enjoyed it as well...

Data Extract 5.62 Episode 2 Programme Block 9

Although the school where Eleanor completed her first placement taught French, she concedes that such lessons took place only sporadically as '*all the things that weren't that important*' got '*dropped*' from the timetable. The abandonment of PFLs in favour of other priorities and other subjects is a commonplace occurrence in many primary schools in England (Jones and Coffey, 2013; Driscoll, 2014) and is barrier which stands in the way of Eleanor being able to teach it with any regularity. Her experience on her final school placement, however, sits in contrast to this. She concludes that it was the flexible nature of the school's timetable, coupled with the value she felt the teachers placed on FL learning, which allowed for the consistent teaching of all foundation subjects, including French. Eleanor's contrasting experiences indicates that the distinctive nature of the ethos and values of individual schools, and the teachers who work in them, can perform either a **helping** or **opposing** role with regards to the implementation of FLs in the primary sector.

As Eleanor's reflections on her school experiences (the **sending** actant) continue, she considers not only the opportunities she has had to teach a FL, but the extent to which she has been able to enact her vision and beliefs about effective PFL practice (the **object** of her desire) (see Data Extract 5.63). The way in which the school's curriculum was planned and organised provided her with clear opportunities to contextualise the foreign language and to link it to other aspects of the children's learning. The school's project-based approach to curriculum planning thus undoubtedly had a substantial influence on Eleanor's practice and beliefs. She does also recognise the limitations of such an approach. Specifically, and despite her desire to teach IU, Eleanor did not feel that the topics lent themselves to teaching this aspect of the FL curriculum. This narrative extract therefore exemplifies the way in which school contexts can both support (acts as a **helping** force) and limit (act as an **opposing** force) individual action (Biesta and Tedder, 2007; Eteläpeltö *et al.*, 2013).

(TR24) *In terms of being able to put my vision for PFLs into practice*, I think in terms of the context, it was really easy because they had the topic, so you could always link it back to the topic. Like they did with the Egyptians... And the same with the jungle topic... So I think in that aspect if you've already got a topic it's quite easy, whereas I think some schools they have a topic but that topic isn't used. Whereas this school try to put the topic within all the subjects, so I think that's quite a good way of linking.

With intercultural understanding I didn't really, there wasn't that much, there weren't any lessons that I did intercultural understanding. But then, like I said before, they did do their topic, a whole half term topic on France.

Data Extract 5.63 Episode 2 Programme Block 10

Eleanor concludes Episode 2 of her narrative with a reflection on her motivation for teaching languages, as well as a recognition of the challenges she will face in doing so (see Data Extract 5.64). Eleanor (who can be judged as occupying the **receiver** role in this narrative section) has secured her first teaching post in the school where she completed her final school placement. This reflection can therefore be interpreted with this specific context in mind. Her **object** of desire is to teach successful and engaging FL lessons. She explicitly identifies that her motivation for this arises from her desire to ensure that the children enjoy their language lessons and an acknowledgement that she is able to offer a model of good practice to her colleagues (the **sending** actants). This recognition of the positive impact she is able to have on the school appears to support a growth in her sense of professional confidence and agency (Short, 1994; Eteläpeltö *et al.*, 2013).

(TR25) *My motivation* is that I just think it's a really quite fun aspect to do...And you can see the excitement on their faces. And that is a motivator because you see the children think, "Oh, I've learnt another language," ...and they're going around telling everyone. So that is one motivator.

And I think sharing it with other teachers as well, and other teachers come up to you and say, "Oh, I heard about your French lesson, it was really, really good. Can you help me plan, or have you got any suggestions?" I think that's it for me. Because when you think, "Oh, well, actually that lesson was quite good," because other people are asking me to model lessons for them and help them...

(TR26) *But I think the challenges might be...* having it like just dropping off at the end, "Oh, we haven't got enough time so we'll get rid of French this week." I think that's a challenge because it's not as though you can help the children progress every week if you've missed two weeks of French because you might then have to go then right to beginning and relearn it...Obviously maths and English have top priority. Because of all the levels that you have to have, and they have to reach this level by this age. So they've got top priority over everything. And then...some teachers don't have the confidence in French...So maybe that's why French drops off as well because... it takes longer if they don't really know what they're doing.

Data Extract 5.64 Episode 2 Programme Block 11

The positive responses she has received both from the children she teaches and from her colleagues are affirming for Eleanor. The perception of herself as something of a pedagogic expert in relation to PFLs appears to have supported a growth in her self-esteem (Short, 1994; Toom *et al.*, 2015; Oolbakkink-Marchand *et al.*, 2017), and this is therefore deemed to fulfil the **helping** role in this final narrative extract. Although this helping force appears strong, Eleanor does recognise the very real challenges (**opponents**) she will face in achieving her goal as she enters the profession. In particular she identifies that a lack of time and the priority necessarily afforded to English and Maths are perceived as the most significant barriers to being able to teach languages regularly enough to ensure her pupils make progress and experience success in their learning. Although in Programme Block 9, Eleanor paints a very positive picture of this school in relation to the importance placed on teaching a broad and balanced curriculum, it is perhaps interesting to note that the issues she presents here as potential barriers to teaching languages are the very ones she felt were less of an issue in this school.

In conclusion, analysis of Eleanor's second narrative episode reveals much less consistency in that which occupies the various actantial roles compared with those in Episode 1. Although on the whole her vision and beliefs about effective PFLs has remained unchanged, the data suggests that other goals (narrative **objects**) have begun to emerge. Her desire to ensure she is able to teach PFLs and, specifically to teach it in a way which is harmonious with her own pedagogic beliefs, has become important to Eleanor. For the first time in her narrative she also considers the needs of her colleagues, recognising that teacher confidence and competence in this subject area is often deficient (Wade and Marshall, 2009; Legg, 2013; Woolhouse *et al.*, 2013). She expresses a desire, and a belief in her own capacity, to support this.

The deviation in that which is identified as Eleanor's object of desire appears more often than not to be motivated by her experiences in school. This is a distinct shift compared with Episode 1 where the **sending** actantial role was fulfilled exclusively by her university-based specialism module. This would seem to reflect other research which points to the more insubstantial influence of teacher education programmes on beginning teacher beliefs compared with their school experiences (Higgins and Leat, 2001; Brouwer and Korthagen, 2005; Soini *et al.*, 2015). In view of the degree of influence Eleanor's experience in school appears to have had on her thinking, it is perhaps not surprising that, for the most part, the children are positioned as the **receivers** of the benefit throughout. This is consistent with her narrative in Episode 1.

The **helping** forces identified in this second episode are more wide-ranging than those evident in Episode 1, however two central factors appear to have emerged. As per the preceding episode, Eleanor's developing pedagogic knowledge and beliefs play a considerable role in overcoming the potential barriers she faces and in supporting her ability to achieve her goals. In addition, though, the opportunities she has had to spend time in school have also been important. In particular her experience of planning in her last placement school, which exemplified for her how children's learning might be linked to other areas of the curriculum, appears to have been instrumental in supporting her ability to translate her beliefs about providing engaging contexts for language learning into practice. The identification of these helping actantial forces in Eleanor's narrative seem to support the views of those who believe that it is scholarship interwoven with practical experience which supports beginning teachers, not only in expressing a philosophy for good teaching, but also in employing these beliefs and

ideas successfully in the classroom (Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Brower and Korthagen, 2005; Martin, 2007).

Whilst these school experiences were undoubtedly judged as influencing Eleanor's development in positive ways, it must be recognised that her school placements also raised her awareness of some considerable barriers. Although Eleanor raises a diverse range of potential **opposing** forces throughout this episode, she returns most frequently to the low value placed on PFLs in schools compared with other subjects. In particular, the priority given to core subjects in an already over-crowded curriculum often results in FLs being omitted from the timetable (Tinsley and Board, 2017). This has resulted in Eleanor having no opportunity to observe good practice and presents a potential future barrier to her being able to teach FLs regularly enough to ensure children make progress and experience success in their learning.

5.3.3 Episode 3

This third and final episode marks the end of Eleanor's NQT year where she has been teaching a mixed Year 5/6 class in a large primary school. Her narrative begins as she describes the extent to which she has been able to teach French (the **object** of her desire) over the course of her first year of teaching (see Data Extract 5.65).

(TR1) At the beginning of the year we did French once a week. So in the autumn term and spring term we did French at least once a week. I would plan that and share it with the other Year 5/6 teacher. But then recently just because it has got to summer and we have had SATS it has kind of been shoved to one side. Which is horrible to say but it is one of those things that just gets shoved to the side...

(TR2) I think it is the ethos of the school *that means that we can teach French* because Years Three and Four do it as well. We have got a language coordinator who sets out the topics... She kind of checks up on what we have done. (TR3) She plans *the French* for everyone...but Class teachers are responsible for teaching their own French. They have had in place for a while ...

Data Extract 5.65 Episode 3 Programme Block 1

Eleanor suggests that it is the ethos of her social context, where the teaching of foreign languages has been fully embedded throughout the school for some time, which acts as the **helping** force, enabling her to teach languages weekly throughout the first two terms of the

year. She also explains how the school has an established languages coordinator who plans the French for all of the teachers. This is judged as being another considerable helping factor. Despite the perceived strength of this actant, the necessity to prepare the children for their SATs tests over the course of the summer has proved to be a stronger **opponent** in her year group and has resulted in French lessons being '*shoved to one side*' for the majority of this final term.

As Eleanor continues to describe the organisation for the teaching of PFLs in her school, the **object** of her desire remains consistent with Programme Block 1 (see Data Extract 5.66). Eleanor and her colleague are now, however, identified as the sole beneficiaries (**receivers**) in this narrative section.

(TR4) I do the French lesson planning for my class and the other Year 5/6 teacher. I was doing the French because I'm more confident with that and she was doing science...

We have got some resources... there are planned lessons that you can follow in the books and stuff. But sometimes they don't quite link with your topics so it is quite hard to just go from that. But they are quite useful just for the vocabulary. But it is quite nice just to plan your own lessons so you know exactly how it is going to go rather than just going from a piece of planning that's not your own.

Data Extract 5.66 Episode 3 Programme Block 2

Eleanor's pedagogic knowledge has supported her level of confidence and sense of professional agency (Short, 1994), enabling her to plan French for her own class as well as for her colleague. The strength of this **helping** force is reinforced towards the end of this data extract. Eleanor identifies that the school has resources available to support teachers' planning, however she prefers to rely on her own knowledge and skills to plan her lessons. The published resources are therefore considered as a barrier (**opponent**) to her being able to plan the kind of lessons which are more aligned with her beliefs about good PFL practice.

The focus of Eleanor's narrative now shifts away from a description of how PFLs is organised in the school. Instead Eleanor begins to articulate what she now considers to be important to her in relation to her FL teaching (see Data Extract 5.67). Specifically, she expresses a desire that children (the **receivers**) have a visible outcome of their learning (the narrative **object**). Writing is deemed to be an important means of evidencing the children's learning (the **helping** force)

and overcoming the potential that children may not feel that they are making progress in their learning (the **opponent**). This is consistent with previous sections of her narrative. The description Eleanor provides of her approach to teaching FLs, however, reveals a discord with the beliefs she had formerly articulated about good PFL practice. In particular in Episode 1 (Data Extract 5.49) and Episode 2 (Data Extract 5.55), Eleanor argues that PFL lessons should be underpinned by cognitive challenge and meaningful communication which moves learners from word to sentence level output (Wesche and Skehan, 2002; Macaro, 2014; Manchón, 2014; Hood and Tobutt, 2015). In this extract, however, her lessons appear to reflect the vocabulary-based learning which she had originally rejected as less than effective practice and which is more prevalent in the primary sector (Cable *et al.*, 2010; Martin, 2012). There is, therefore, little evidence here of her enacting the vision she had asserted as being important to her.

(TR5) ...it's important to me that the kids actually get something out of it rather than just learning vocabulary ... so they actually produce something in writing...for them to say, "This is what I have learned". Then for them to stick it in their topic books so they know that they have learned this and that we can refer back to it as well. (TR6) ... at the start of the lesson ...we will go through the vocabulary, maybe do a few games and some actions to try and remember them. They get quite engaged with that. Then I will bring in writing, just writing the vocabulary and putting in some pictures with it, whatever.

Data Extract 5.67 Episode 3 Programme Block 3

Data Extract 5.68 provides an amplification of the discord evident between Eleanor's beliefs and practice as revealed in the previous section. In the very early stages of her training (Programme Block 1, Episode 1) Eleanor's seminar had prompted her to reject a noun-based pedagogy which relies solely on repetition and memorisation. Instead she sought to provide more challenge for children (the **receivers**), arguing that it was more important for children to be supported in moving beyond word-level to applying the language (the **object** of her desire). A year into her first teaching post, however, she asserts her view that, in her school context, moving children beyond word-level is too challenging. Primarily this is due to the fact that such an approach sits in opposition to the '*vocabulary based*' learning she sees as dominating the first two years of the children's language learning experiences in her school. It is clear, therefore, that the established pedagogic approaches in the school (the **opposing** force), whilst being empowering in relation to the enactment of some aspects of her vision for PFLs, is also significantly constraining her practice as she believes that she must '*fit in with what*

everyone else is doing'. The strength of this opposing force is therefore seen to overwhelm Eleanor's beliefs about effective early FL practice (the **helping** force). This results in her lowering her expectations for the children she is teaching (Feiman-Nemser, 2001) and appears to discourage her from any attempts to innovate or influence the status quo (Allen, 2009).

(TR10) In terms of the importance of children being able to have a conversation and being able to string a sentence together... It is quite hard for it to feature. I have tried numerous times but when it is things like the vocabulary that they are learning sometimes it is hard to get them to put it into a sentence. Their faces are like, "What? I have got to now put that into a sentence?" I don't know. I think the focus is still very much at word level. I think as well because what they have come from, like Year Three and Four it has been vocabulary based and then just a few sentences here and there. I sort of have to fit in with what everyone is doing.

(TR11) It would be lovely if it were more conversation and more sentence work...

Data Extract 5.68 Episode 3 Programme Block 5

The next programme block is perhaps the most pessimistic section of Eleanor's narrative (see Data Extract 5.69). She understands that learners require frequent opportunities to practise the new language. This understanding is the **sending** force, motivating her desire to be able to teach FLs regularly enough to ensure that her pupils (the **receivers**) make progress (the narrative **object**). Her reflections, however, are dominated by the barriers she faces in doing so.

Her experience in school has revealed that other aspects of school life, including the teaching of English and Maths, often take precedence and result in French lessons being abandoned (the **opponent** in this section). Although Eleanor maintains that as teachers they are able to prioritise the subjects they teach depending on what they deem children '*need the most*' (the potential **helping** force), it is suggested that FLs are unlikely to be selected over other aspects of the children's learning. The opposing force in this data extract is therefore judged as overwhelming the helping factors and consequently Eleanor's practice is once again bounded by the constraints of her social context (Preistley *et al*, 2012; Oolbekkink-Marchand *et al*, 2017).

But when French is just dropped off the timetable because so many other things come in you can't keep going with it because the children just forget things so quickly...

Yes it just seems busy all the time. We have got a school calendar that we go through every time we are on PPA to put into our timetable, "This person is going to be out" or, "The Year Sixes are going to secondary school for a transition day", or, "The Year Fives are going off here" ... Then obviously English and maths are quite important and other things just happen. It is all those things.

(TR12) We decide between us what we think we need to drop off...But yes it is quite hard to decide what you get rid of. I think it is what the kids need the most. Yes because I am not very confident in teaching PE or ICT but I think the kids need that...

Data Extract 5.69 Episode 3 Programme Block 6

Although this third episode began with Eleanor identifying that the ethos of the school was such that foreign languages were seen to be an integral part of the curriculum, the preceding two programme blocks have painted a less positive picture. In data extract 5.70, however, Eleanor returns to reflecting on the ethos of the school and this way in which this supports her ability to teach PFLs (the **object** of her desire). Specifically, Eleanor believes that it is her Headteacher's commitment to providing the children with a broad and balanced curriculum which acts as the **helping** force, securing the position of PFLs, at least to some extent, in the school. Consistent with the previous programme blocks, a lack of time and other priorities consistently threaten to usurp opportunities to teach FL lessons and are regarded as the central **opponents**.

(TR22) I think it is just time *that gets in the way of being able to teach languages sometimes*...in the last few weeks we just haven't done any French because we have had SATS and then we have had art week and then we have had kids going off and doing sports tournaments.... Yes I think it is difficult.

It's not that there is more of a focus on English and Maths because our Head tries to make sure that we aren't just doing those all the time because for the kids it is not fair on them. It gets tiring for them and it gets tiring for us as well... Obviously it has quite a big part of school *but* we try and link our topics to make it more fun...

(TR24) *My motivation to teach French* I think is just as strong as it was. It just doesn't get put into practice as much. But ...obviously it depends on the schools...Yes it is definitely still there. It is just there are so many other things you have got to think about.

Data Extract 5.70 Episode 3 Programme Block 7

Towards the end of the programme block, Eleanor explicitly identifies the disjunction between her motivation to teach FLs and the reality of school life, and appears to acknowledge the way in which school contexts can act to constrain and influence the practice of teachers. This honest recognition would seem to exemplify the 'transition shock' Veenman (1984:143) argues is experienced by beginning teachers as they enter the profession and their ideals collide with the harsh realities of daily life in the classroom.

Eleanor's narrative concludes with her articulating her belief in the importance of providing children with the opportunity to learn another language (the **object** of her desire) (see Data Extract 5.71). This desire stems from her belief in the importance of exposing children (the **receivers**) to other cultures and to provide them with the knowledge and understanding which she and others judge has the potential to change attitudes (the **sending** force) (Satchwell, 2006; Carrick, 2007; Woodgate-Jones, 2009). Within this extract Eleanor describes a critical incident which happened at school. Despite her assertion of the importance of challenging negative cultural attitudes, she admits to having found this situation difficult to manage and was unsure how to respond appropriately. It could be argued that her lack of experience and understanding of how to go about planning for and dealing with the more complex aspects of IU, such as stereotyping and prejudice, fulfils the primary **opposing** force (Sercu, 2002). Eleanor does, however, identify that her class this year consists of several EAL learners. This can be perceived as providing a helping function as she is provided with valuable opportunities to capitalise on the experiences of these children as a means of exploring different cultural and family traditions in a meaningful way.

(TR19) I just think *learning a foreign language* is an important life skill... In my class I have got three children that are EAL. I have got a child who speaks German as well. (TR20) The other three are Polish...At Christmas we...were talking about all the different traditions like, "In England this is what we do. In France this is what some people in France do"... "This is what they do in Germany"... the Polish kids said, "This is what we do in our family" because some of them have incorporated English and Polish traditions.

(TR21) I just think it is important for them ... some sort of interaction with other people from different countries as well... So they are not frightened to do it.

I think it's important that the children are exposed to *a foreign language*. They just haven't gone through their whole school life not even hearing a different word in a different language. (TR25) I think it is because the UK is just such a multicultural place. You hear so many things on the news like stuff to do with immigrants and...racism and things... I think it is about changing some attitudes because you get some comments from some children about certain things and you think, "Have they heard something on the news? Have they picked that up from at home?"...It is giving them that kind of knowledge that there are other opinions out there kind of thing.

I mean when the Paris attack happened in November we had a minute's silence. Some of the kids were talking about, "Why did we have a minute's silence?..."One of the children said, "Oh well all Muslims are terrorists". I have never been in that situation before. I had to tiptoe around it because I have not been taught how to approach those situations so it was really hard. But I think that is one of the important things that language. It is not just about the language but also about the other cultures. I think that is really important. Like I said it would be lovely to be able to fit more cultural understanding in...

Data Extract 5.71 Episode 3 Programme Block 8

This programme block does reveal some level of dissonance between the beliefs Eleanor espouses and the reality of her practice. Specifically, throughout this extract she seems to consider FL learning and the development of children's cultural understanding as being inevitably and inextricably connected (Sharpe, 2001; Woodgate-Jones, 2009). It is only at the very close of her narrative, though, that she returns to her earlier recognition that she has been offered only limited opportunities to systematically plan FL lessons which focus specifically on IU.

By way of conclusion, analysis of the third and final episode of Eleanor's narrative exposes the way in which her thinking and practice in relation to PFLs has changed in response to her social context (Higgins and Leat, 2001; Brouwer and Korthagen, 2005; Soini *et al.*, 2015). In Episodes 1 and 2, Eleanor's **object** of desire was overwhelmingly connected to her beliefs about

effective early FL learning and teaching. For the most part in this episode, however, her narrative centres on her desire to teach it and the factors which appear to either support or inhibit the achievement of her goal. The school environment which she now inhabits, and which provides the context for her thinking and learning, is thus regarded as the **sending** narrative force. With regards to this object, Eleanor consistently identifies aspects of her school's organisation and ethos as fulfilling the **helping** narrative force. In particular she judges that the staff, including the Headteacher, are committed to providing broad, balanced and engaging learning opportunities for the children (who remain predominantly as the **receivers**). This commitment is reflected particularly in the project-based curriculum of the school which is judged to go some way to ensuring that foundation subjects (including PFLs) are taught regularly. Despite the potential strength of this helping force, Eleanor does acknowledge that other priorities regularly threaten to take the place of FL lessons (Jones and Coffey, 2013; Driscoll, 2014) and this presents the chief **opposing** force, which is consistent with her narrative in Episode 2.

Perhaps the most important issue to emerge from Eleanor's final narrative episode is the discord between some elements of her beliefs and her practice in the classroom. This discord is seen firstly in relation to her views about the importance of supporting linguistic progression for children. In particular, Eleanor had asserted that a pedagogy dominated by word-level learning did little to support children in applying language or communicating in meaningful ways (Hunt, 2009). The lessons she describes, however, appear to reflect the vocabulary-driven approaches she had criticised earlier in her narrative. Where she explicitly recognises this, she judges that her decision to adopt such an approach is as a result of having to conform to the established teaching methods evident in the rest of the school. The other area of dissonance appears to be in relation to Intercultural Understanding. This aspect of PFLs was first raised in Episode 2 of Eleanor's narrative yet, while Eleanor continues to maintain that this is important as a means of developing empathy and challenging prejudice (Satchwell, 2006; Carrick, 2007), she admits that such teachings are rarely translated into her classroom practice. Once again she judges that her school context, and specifically the way in which the curriculum is planned and organised, hinders her ability to embed IU into her teaching of FLs. This final episode of Eleanor's narrative perhaps exemplifies the 'contingent pragmatism' Priestley *et al.* (2012: 552) argue is often reflected in teachers' practice. Certainly aspects of Eleanor's narrative expose the extent to which she has amended her teaching to fit in with the

established practices in the school but does not necessarily appear to subscribe fully to the ideology behind it.

5.3.4 Eleanor's Story – a Summary

By means of summary, Figure 5.3 charts the dominant changes evident in the actantial forces acting over time on Eleanor's narrative. Not unlike Isla and Holly, Eleanor's school-based experiences exerted an increasingly powerful influence over her practice in relation to PFLs. As in Holly's narrative, it is the relationship between the helping and opposing forces that is particularly worthy of note.

In Eleanor's narrative, her experiences in school were revealed as occupying both of these actantial roles simultaneously. On the one hand, there are some positive examples of the way in which classroom-based experiences and school context supported Eleanor's development as a teacher of PFLs. The practice she had observed during one of her school placements, and the project-based curriculum in the school in which she was working as an NQT, both served to shape and reinforce her beliefs about the principles of effective FL pedagogy for young learners. On the other hand, however, the low status of PFLs and the generally established teaching approaches in FLs across the school, which were primarily noun-based, sat in opposition to Eleanor's beliefs about the importance of enabling children to manipulate and apply the FL to communicate. As a result, and despite her own beliefs, Eleanor felt compelled to replicate these teaching approaches in her own classroom. In this regard, her school experience and culture served to constrain and limit the nature of her practice school. Thus, the successful attainment of Eleanor's object of desire became less than straightforward, as the tug-of-war between the supporting and constraining influences of her professional context was played out in her narrative.

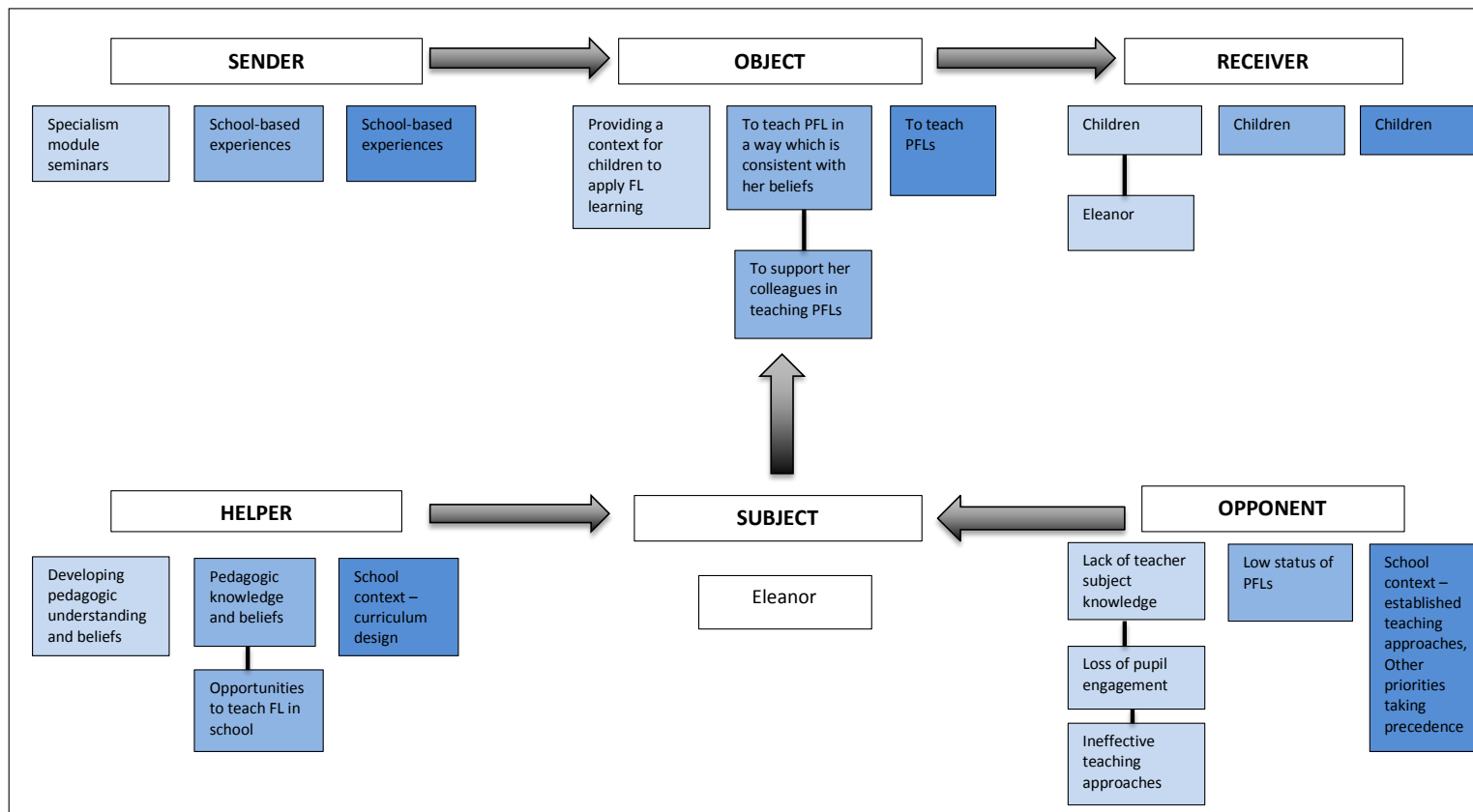


Figure 5.3 Summary of actantial shifts in Eleanor's narrative

5.4 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the individual stories of three novice primary teachers specialising in PFLs as they journeyed from trainees in the second year of their undergraduate programme through to the completion of their first year in service. In 'narrativizing' (Squire *et al.*, 2014:24), or crafting and presenting, the raw data from the three phases of data collection into episodic monologues, and in preserving the integrity and temporality of each trainee's story, the growth over time of their philosophy for good PFL practice was explored. Greimas' actantial schema provided the lens through which these narratives were analysed and was adopted as a means of revealing the forces acting to shape them (Daniel, 2012), thus exposing the way in which their thinking was tied to their specific contexts and individual experiences (Webster and Mertova, 2007). The congruence and dissonance evident between their visions and eventual practices in the classroom was also revealed.

The final chapter which follows draws together the key findings from the three trainee narratives presented here, and explores them in relation to the themes which emerged from the analysis of the trainees' patchwork reflections in Chapter 4. Conclusions and broader implications resulting from these findings are also considered.

CHAPTER 6 – Conclusion

This final chapter summarises the research and presents an account of the significance and contribution of the findings to the preparation of beginning teachers in the field of PFLs. Potential implications for teacher educators arising from this study are identified and discussed. Consideration is also given to the decision to adopt a narrative inquiry as a pedagogical and methodological approach, specifically, the value of applying Greimas' actantial schema as a framework for analysis and the methodological contribution this has to offer.

6.1 Significance and contribution to teacher education and the field of PFLs

The current educational landscape in England is characterised by continuous reform and a focus on standards and accountability, particularly in the core subjects (Busher and Cremin, 2012). This has resulted in the marginalisation of foundation subjects such as PFLs (Driscoll, 2014), despite its recent statutory status in the national curriculum (DfE, 2013). With the introduction of FLs into the KS2 curriculum, there is a growing interest in this field of study; and research is on the rise which provides a view on appropriate teaching methods and curriculum content and which reveals the reality of PFL provision in the primary sector.

The body of existing literature, as presented in Chapter 2, and which foregrounded this study, exposed gaps which this research sought to fill. What is less evident, for example, is research which seeks to develop a deeper understanding of the teaching and learning of this area of the curriculum from the perspective of those who are actually teaching it. In relation to teacher education more generally, there also appears to be a scarcity of research which gives beginning teachers a voice as a means of capturing and exploring the relationship between their training and their in-service experiences. In this regard, this study provides timely and valuable insights, helping to bridge the gap between these two under-represented areas of research.

The primary aim of this research was to critically examine the developing articulation and conceptualisation of the beliefs and practices of a group of undergraduate primary trainee teachers, specialising in PFLs. This study was longitudinal in nature because it sought to examine the extent to which the trainees' practice, as they entered the profession, reflected a sense of congruence or dissonance with their beliefs. Integral to this research was a desire to expose that which both supported and inhibited the development of their understanding and their eventual practice in this area of the curriculum.

The following research aims (RA) therefore drove this research:

RA 1. To critically evaluate trainee teachers' developing articulation and conceptualisation of their beliefs and practices for PFLs.

RA2. To explore the changing relationship between beliefs and practices for trainees as they become teachers.

RA3. To analyse congruence and dissonance in trainees' narratives of beliefs and practices.

An exploration and comparison of the findings from both the trainees' patchwork reflections (as explored in Chapter 4) and the episodic narratives for three trainees (presented and analysed in Chapter 5) have generated some significant findings, which are the focus for this concluding chapter. As a researcher I feel privileged to have had access to the individual and personally-situated thinking and learning of my trainees. It is recognised that the small group, and specificity of the context in which this research took place, limits the extent to which generalised claims can be made. I argue, however, that the conclusions which are drawn from this study have important implications for those with an interest in teacher education who seek to understand the extent to which ITT programmes have the capacity to shape and support the development of novice teachers. In particular, they make a valuable contribution to our understanding of how we might successfully support beginning teachers to firstly, develop powerful, research-informed beliefs about teaching and learning which they are able to translate in concrete ways into their practice and; secondly, to empower them to be able to make a positive contribution to PFL provision as they enter the profession.

6.1.1 The contribution of module design on trainee beliefs about good practice in PFLs (Research Aim 1)

From the outset of Isla's, Holly's and Eleanor's narratives, their specialism modules were consistently identified as having had an important influence on the growth of their beliefs and pedagogic understanding of PFLs, and in motivating their desires to teach in particular ways. Specifically, opportunities to engage with literature and to explore and articulate their thinking by means of the weekly online patchwork approach to collaborative reflection were judged as being of consequence. The ability of trainee teachers to explicate their views is judged by Bronkhorst *et al.* (2011) as being crucial, because, as was explored in Chapter 2, it is this which determines their future ability to adopt 'principled' rather than 'technical' practices in the classroom (Ovens, 2000). It is also argued that, in developing a framework of principles, novice teachers are supported in order to become less acquiescent and more able to critique and challenge the status quo (Goodson and Hargreaves, 1996; Swarbrick, 2014).

It is argued by some that teacher education programmes should engage beginning teachers in an interrogation of their current beliefs, exploring how these have been knowingly or unconsciously shaped by prior learning experiences, and the extent to which these beliefs are aligned with current thinking about teaching and learning (Feiman-Nemser, 2001). Certainly, there is evidence in the trainees' narratives of the way in which these aspects of the module design supported them in reflecting on their prior language learning experiences and associated beliefs and assumptions which, until that point, had remained unchallenged. The correlation between their university-based modules and the development of their pedagogic understanding and philosophy for PFLs was also identified in the trainees' reflective patches presented in Chapter 4. Thematic analysis of these reflections identified that trainees' articulation of their views about effective early FL teaching and learning very closely reflected the content of their second year specialism module, with pupil progress, the place of literacy and grammar, supporting learner autonomy, providing a context for pupil learning, and maintaining pupil engagement all being cited and explored.

Rigorous analysis of the narratives presented in Chapter 5, however, revealed the extent to which the interpretation of these principles, and the degree to which they were seen as important, differed somewhat for each of the three trainees. Isla's narrative, for example,

reflected research which contends that supporting pupils' linguistic progress leads to a development of pupils' own self-concept as successful language learners and is a prerequisite of pupil motivation (Johnstone, 2003; Satchwell, 2006; Graham, 2014). Holly, on the other hand, was more preoccupied with the need to capitalise on opportunities to link the children's foreign language learning with other areas of the curriculum, thus providing a context for the children and supporting their engagement. Although Eleanor's views paralleled those of Holly, at least in the early stages of her narrative, she judged that the context for learning was only significant in so far as it provided a purposeful backdrop for the children to *apply* the foreign language. The need to support pupils in learning how to manipulate and apply their knowledge of language and language structure to new contexts is supported by Hunt (2009) and is perceived as being crucial in moving them from mere word-level learners to being able to confidently use the FL (Hood and Tobutt, 2015)

Hargreaves (2012) contends that, for many trainees, the predominant concern is on developing practical teaching skills. The realities of classroom practice are, therefore, perceived as being more important than the development of theoretical perspectives and values (Swarbrick, 2014). This study provides evidence to the contrary. Analysis of trainee narratives clearly indicates not only the extent to which they positively engaged with the literature explored in seminars, but also the way in which they used this to shape and articulate their understanding and thinking. It is, however, acknowledged that the extent to which elements of their theoretically-framed beliefs remained an integral part of their expressed philosophy and practice two years later was variable. Although it is clearly well documented in the trainees' narratives that the more theoretically framed, university-based learning had a powerful influence on the development of their beliefs, the findings from this study also point to their school-based experiences as having been transformative for them.

6.1.2 Supporting and limiting the enactment of trainee beliefs: the influence of school-based experiences (Research Aim 1)

Whilst the focus of this research was on the university-based element of the trainees' programme, their experiences in school also emerged as being of considerable importance. Holly, for example, described on a number of occasions throughout her narrative the opportunities she had to observe the PFL coordinator teach a French lesson during one of her

school placements. Analysis revealed that she considered this experience to be a central helping force in strengthening her beliefs about the importance of children being able to manipulate and apply language. Significantly, this experience also provided her with knowledge of practical ways in which this might be achieved. In Episode 2 of her narrative, Eleanor, on the other hand, explicitly recognised the lack of opportunity she had been given to observe the teaching of grammar in primary school. This was identified as creating a substantial barrier to the development of her understanding of how grammar might support early FL learning, and also resulted in a lack of understanding of how to go about teaching it.

The importance of trainees having the opportunity to observe PFLs in school, and also to contribute to the teaching of it, was highlighted in this study. Isla, for example, attributed her theoretical understanding of effective PFL practice to her specialism modules. It was, however, the range of opportunities she was given to experiment with teaching approaches, and to reflect on the impact of these approaches on the children's responses and their learning, which was particularly empowering for her (Fullen, 1993). Enacting possibilities in practice was equally highlighted in the trainees' patchwork reflections presented in Chapter 4. It was clear that those who were able to engage in at least some FL teaching on their school placement valued this as an opportunity to connect the pedagogic approaches considered during their specialism module in meaningful ways to the classroom. For many, these experiences also enabled them to become more skilled at applying a range of pedagogic tools and strategies, resulting in a growth in confidence.

Although in the previous section I have argued that scholarly engagement is important for the development of beginning teachers, the trainees' narratives over time also revealed that theory alone was insufficient. For these trainees, theoretically-framed knowledge was not merely learned as an externally imposed 'truth' from their programme seminars but, rather, was personally constructed and also powerfully influenced by their school-based experiences and contexts (Wideen *et al.*, 1996). Opportunities to apply strategies, advocated in their seminars, deepened the trainees' pedagogic understanding and served to bolster their beliefs. Fullen (1993) contends that enabling trainees to become skilled in, and masters of, their personal visions and beliefs is of critical importance to both their development as teachers and also as a means of supporting them in becoming future agents of change.

Providing such opportunities may, however, be less than straightforward. The fact that PFLs are a recent addition to the KS2 statutory curriculum means that there is a distinct shortage of teachers in the primary sector who possess any particular language expertise or experience of teaching the subject, and who are, therefore, able to provide sufficiently good models of practice (Cable *et al.*, 2012). An additional challenge exists, in that any practice the trainees do witness is often at odds with their own ideals and/or those advocated by their ITT programmes (Putnam and Borko, 2000; Brouwer and Korthagen, 2005). The findings from this research highlight the tensions and struggles the trainees faced as they tried to reconcile their own beliefs and values with the often conflicting discourse of their school contexts. This conclusion should certainly not be seen as a criticism of the teachers themselves, but rather as a commentary on, and recognition of, the constraints of the system in which they work. The performativity culture and overburdened curriculum, which is judged to influence teachers' practices, was also seen to affect the degree of agency the trainees in this study perceived they had to deviate from and reconstruct social norms.

Data from this study suggests that opportunities to observe experienced practitioners and to try out pedagogic approaches advocated by their pre-service training are necessary conditions for adequately preparing novice teachers for the transition from university to the classroom. This does not, however, take into account the potentially dominant influence that school culture can exert on their thinking and practice as they enter the profession.

6.1.3 Congruence and dissonance in trainee beliefs and practice as they enter the profession: the influence of social context (Research Aim 3)

Existing research has served to reveal the extent to which the pedagogic beliefs of beginning teachers are often strengthened over the course of their training (Brouwer and Korthagen, 2005). Although this is reflected in this study, it is also evident that the impact of these beliefs, in terms of what they thought they could achieve in practice, began to diminish as the trainees' experience in school increased. At the start of their narratives, for example, Isla, Holly and Eleanor located the object of their desire within deeper, more philosophical beliefs about effective PFL practice. As they began to spend more time in school, however, and the realities

of daily life in the classroom came to the fore, the data reveals how they became driven by more pragmatic aspirations.

All three trainees, for example, concluded from their experiences as NQTs that PFLs was accorded only very low status and priority. Holly and Eleanor, therefore, identified their desire just to be able to teach a FL, and this took priority over their ideals about *how* they would like to teach it. Although Isla adopted a broader, more institutional perspective, she also sought to ensure that PFLs was taught more consistently across her school. The lack of importance placed on foreign language learning in schools also emerged in the trainees' patchwork reflections, written in response to their school placements. This low status was judged to be a central factor inhibiting the enactment of their vision in the classroom. These findings echo the views of Kane (2007), who contends that novice teachers are often seen to abandon their ideals about teaching and learning in favour of focusing on what they feel able to achieve in the school context they find themselves. More notable, however, is the way in which school contexts can act to change a novice teacher's philosophy with regards to effective pedagogic practices. Eleanor's narrative, in particular, provided clear evidence of such a change. This erosion of ideology led, at least to some extent, to a contradictory discourse, where dissonance over time emerged in relation to that which she deemed to be important in relation to PFLs.

Certainly, it would seem that school contexts and school-based experiences are powerful determinants of beginning teacher values and practices in relation to PFLs as they begin their careers. In fact, the findings of this study suggest that they can be more influential than the exposure to theory and opportunities for reflection the trainees were privy to at university. This adds weight to existing research which also points to the less substantial influence of teacher education programmes on novice teachers' values and practices, at least in the short term, compared with their daily experiences in school (Higgins and Leat, 2001; Brouwer and Korthagen, 2015; Soini *et al.*, 2015).

Allen (2009:650) extrapolates from her own study that novice teachers, in making pedagogic decisions, 'tend to devalue' the theory that underpinned their university-based training. The trainees in this study did appear to draw only infrequently on the pedagogic understanding

and beliefs they acquired during their training once they were in-service. I would argue, however, that their narratives, on the whole, point not to them 'devaluing' this knowledge, but rather that they did not feel sufficiently empowered to enact it in their classrooms. Instead, established school practices seemed to discourage them from attempting to innovate or teach in ways which challenged school norms. The barriers to their practice during their NQT year were, therefore, less personally motivated or attitudinal and, instead more contextually-driven. Thus, this research provides a contrasting perspective to that which suggests that a teacher's practice is borne largely out of personal choice and is rooted in personal values (O'Hanlon, 2012).

It is important to recognise, however, that in this research, school based experiences did not always act to change trainee beliefs in such a striking way. Isla's desire to secure pupil engagement through experiencing progress and success in their language learning remained, for example, consistent throughout her narrative, despite her not being able to enact this in the classroom. Nevertheless, even when beliefs remained strong, the data revealed the extent to which the trainees felt bounded by their social context (Oolbekkink-Marchand, 2017). In other words, their practice was focused more on responding to external pressures rather than reflecting their philosophies about good practice. Isla, Holly and Eleanor explicitly recognised the disjunction between what they had hoped to achieve with regards to their teaching of FLs, and the extent to which these hopes had been realised in their first year of teaching. All three trainees described the way in which their actions in the classroom were strongly orientated towards, and influenced by, a policy of school accountability and a need to meet the conflicting demands of an already overcrowded curriculum.

It has thus far been argued that personally-situated beliefs and social contexts both serve to shape, to a greater or lesser extent, the actions of teachers. Personal motives and a sense of professional agency, however, also have an important part to play.

6.1.4 Changing relationships between beliefs and practice: the influence on, and significance of, professional agency (Research Aim 2)

The focus of this study was on beginning teacher development as they transitioned from trainee to newly qualified teacher. Emerging from the data, however, are some insights into the way in which these NQTs envisaged their practice in PFLs developing, and the potential influence they believed they might have on foreign language provision in their schools in the longer term.

As they shifted their gaze from the here and now of their NQT year to the future, all three participants acknowledged a number of continuing barriers they faced in relation to the teaching of PFLs. The low status of the subject and, when it *was* taught, the pedagogic methods adopted in the school, which were incongruent with their own beliefs, were judged to be the most significant. Eleanor's narrative, for example, revealed that, although her beliefs about PFLs sit in opposition with some of the practices established in her school, she felt constrained by these, believing that she must 'fit in with' the teaching approaches of her colleagues. She did not appear to believe that she was able to play a part in influencing the development of PFLs in her school in any way, despite possessing the knowledge and skills to be able to do so.

Holly's narrative also exposed her distinct lack of agentic action. Despite being presented with a number of potential opportunities to adopt roles that would have enabled her to influence the provision of PFLs across her school, Holly described not only her reluctance to assume such responsibilities, but also her deliberate avoidance of them. Although Holly possessed the pedagogic expertise and understanding about effective PFLs pedagogy necessary to improve provision in her school, she was overt in her acknowledgment that her lack of secure subject knowledge was a considerable barrier for her in feeling that she could adopt such a role. This perceived deficiency in her linguistic competence acted to erode her levels of self-confidence and sense of agency which are fundamental to being able to innovate teaching and learning (Maeroff, 1988; Fullen, 1993).

It was only Isla who appeared to face the future with any real sense of optimism and confidence, perceiving herself as possessing the beliefs and competence necessary to challenge the status quo and to influence practice beyond her own classroom. Despite her general lack of experience, Isla believed that she had something distinctive to offer the pupils and staff in her school. This perception of herself as a pedagogic expert, able to influence something that she deemed to be worthwhile, was acknowledged by her as being an important motivating factor, and was connected to her personal level of self-fulfilment. This, in turn, supported a growth in her professional self-esteem and sense of agency to 'act as a force of change' (Eteläpeltö *et al.*, 2013:46). Thus, in Isla's narrative, a symbiotic relationship appeared to exist between her personal motivation to improve the teaching of languages in her school and the extent to which she felt empowered to do so.

These issues are returned to in the following section with recommendations being made about how, as teacher educators, we might support the agentic actions of beginning teachers.

6.3 Significance and Contribution to Knowledge

The narratives explored and analysed in this study have provided a sense of what these trainees believe in relation to the teaching and learning of PFLs. In contrast to the views of other scholars (Grenfell, 1998; Lawes, 2002), the findings demonstrate that the trainees are able and willing to engage thoughtfully with theory and to use this to reflect on, articulate and justify their pedagogic beliefs. Notably, this study has also provided clear evidence that our work as teacher educators can and does influence the beliefs and understandings of the trainees we work with. This research has also exposed the factors, already well documented in existing research on PFLs, which can inhibit the enactment of beginning teacher beliefs in the classroom. These factors include the low status of the subject in many schools, the focus on results and accountability, and the disconnect between the established foreign language practices in the school and their own beliefs about how it should be taught.

The significance of the contribution of this thesis, however, lies in the exploration, through narrative enquiry, of the changing beliefs and practices of this group of beginning teachers over time. Specifically, the process of exploring, episodically, the development of trainees'

beliefs and practices in PFLs has brought into focus the often deep divide which exists between their university-based learning and school-based experiences, and the tensions which exist for beginning teachers as they make the transition from trainee to in-service teacher. Grenfell (1996) argues that trainees are often caught between this dichotomy of contexts to the extent that it would appear 'as if they are *nowhere*, as neither site provides a permanent anchor for their experiences' (p297). This notion of the positionality of trainees emerged as significant in this study in relation to the way in which they continually re-evaluated, reinterpreted and modified their beliefs and practices in PFLs in response to the social context they found themselves. As a means of conceptualising this and offering new insights into the development of beginning teacher beliefs and practices, I proffer the notion that beginning teachers, rather than being positioned 'nowhere', in fact inhabit two different and distinct '*spaces*'.

In the early part of their pre-service programme, as exemplified in episode 1 of the narratives in this study, trainees are usually firmly positioned in the role of trainee teacher (the *first space*). It is in this first space where they are likely to draw heavily on their university-based learning to develop and make explicit their theoretically-situated beliefs and understandings of the principles of good PFL practice. As they progress through their programme, however, beginning teachers experience a shifting and repositioning of themselves as both trainee teachers on the one hand (the *first space*), and future in-service teachers on the other (the *second space*), with both university-based learning and school-based experiences competing to influence the thinking and practice of the trainee teacher. There is much evidence of these influences in episode 2 of the trainees' narratives in this research. Finally, as beginning teachers enter the profession as NQTs, they become inextricably located in the *second space* and the development and articulation of their beliefs and practices are inevitably more powerfully driven by the specific school contexts in which they are working.

A trainee's understanding and ability to not only articulate sound theoretical principles of teaching and learning, but also to enact these in the classroom, is a matter of deep concern for teacher educators. It is, therefore, crucial to develop a deeper understanding of the complex relationship which exists between the beliefs and eventual practices of beginning teachers and the way in which this relationship is influenced by experiences and external, contextual factors. This research, for example, highlights the cognitive dissonance experienced by trainees as they attempt to locate themselves within the two distinct spaces and, specifically, to shift

between them. This dissonance is not, in of itself, problematic. Indeed, there are many examples in the trainees' narratives which point to the way in which aspects of their programme played an important role in challenging prior thinking and beliefs. The problem arises, however, where trainees, demonstrating that they have acquired the beliefs and understandings in the *first space* to make a difference to children's learning, lack the necessary agency to do so when they are faced with the contextual constraints inherent in the *second space*.

Although teacher educators recognise the potential of beginning teachers to contribute positively to the development of teaching and learning in schools as they enter the profession, this study raises questions about whether ITT programmes could do more to support them to do this. This thesis highlights, therefore, the need for an increased focus and attention in ITT on the development of a *third*, or liminal, *space* to act as a bridge between the other two spaces they inhabit, and to support beginning teachers to make closer connections between the theoretically-framed and school-based facets of their training. In this regard, on-line patchwork-style reflections, for example, provide a valuable framework to enable trainees to examine, justify, and make explicit the learning which has arisen from their reading in relation to their school-based observations and practice. What was perhaps central to the strength of this approach in this research was that these reflections were undertaken while the trainees were situated within their school contexts, thus the patchworks acted as a means of more effectively connecting both contexts.

It is also in this third space where the situational agency (Higgins and Leat, 2001) of beginning teachers can be actively fostered rather than being left to chance (see Figure 6.1). I would argue that a focus on the development of this third space is necessary as a means of enabling beginning teachers to engage in a positive way 'with the contradictory elements of teaching' (Grenfell, 1996:301) inherent in the transition from one space to another and lessen what Macrory (2015) sees as the distancing of the influence of their training on beginning teachers' cognition and practice.

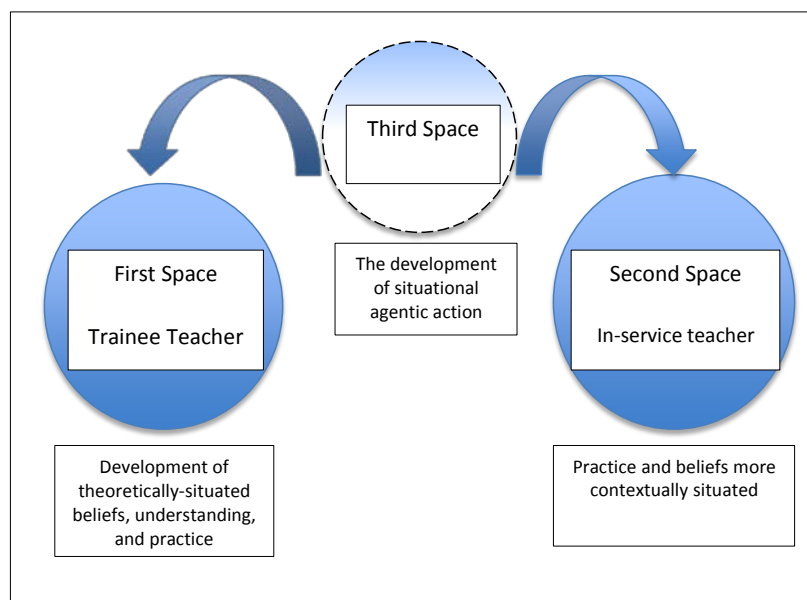


Figure 6.1 Three spaces occupied by beginning teachers as they journey from trainee to in-service teachers

Specialist routes undoubtedly have an important role to play in supporting the development of trainees who are able to act as lead professionals in school. The findings of this study, however, have led me to conclude that the influence of trainees should begin long before they enter the profession as qualified teachers. Instead, teacher education programmes should actively be seeking out opportunities within the *third space* for their trainees to be recognised as serious contributors to the innovation of PFLs (Soini et al., 2015). The implication of this is that trainees should be working in collaborative ways with teachers and subject leaders, applying their knowledge to supporting teacher subject and pedagogic knowledge, and engaging in curriculum design. These opportunities, I would suggest, are also a means by which theory and practice may be successfully integrated and systematically built into programmes as the trainees' experience and understanding develops. I would argue that such an approach may be advantageous in supporting the development of beginning teachers' view of themselves as having the capacity to influence change in schools, this may lead to an

improvement in the extent to which they feel empowered to act in agentic ways as they begin their careers.

6.2 Methodological Significance and Contribution

It was through narrative enquiry that this study sought to explore the changing relationship between trainees' vision and practice as they became teachers (Research Aim 5). It has already been argued, in Chapter 3 of this study, that it is not in the direct re-telling of an individual's story, or in seeking to impartially verify events which have occurred, where the validity of research of this nature lies (Bruner, 1986; Andrews *et al.*, 2013). Instead, it is the creation of a structure, which provides the *why* and *how* to the *what* of these stories, which is integral to our ability to ascribe meaning to them, and to draw 'well grounded' and 'supportable' conclusions from them (Webster and Mortova, 2007:4). Essentially, in applying a robust analytical framework to an individual's narrative, the structure of its coherence, or, conversely, how the story is limited in its coherence, can be revealed.

It is in this regard that this research charts new methodological ground in its application of Greimas' actantial schema to the analysis of teacher narratives. Specifically, this method offers a valuable contribution to research in the field of education which seeks to develop a deeper understanding and 'unique insights' (Riessman, 2008:12) into the way teachers interpret their professional lives. Greimas' (1971) actantial schema exposes the fundamental structures that generate a particular narrative (Daniel, 2012). This allows the researcher to identify places where the underlying actants (and the relationships between them) are shifting, indicating a lack of internal coherence. This, then, provides a framework for identifying and representing the very development of thought and understanding. Analysis of the fluctuating actants in Holly's story, for example, has enabled the complexities and shifting trajectory of her narrative, as she oriented her learning and practice first in response to her university experience and then her school context, to be captured.

Whilst it has been argued that the application of Greimas' actantial schema can contribute to the validity and integrity of narrative research, it is also important to acknowledge the potential influence of researcher bias on the method and outcomes of this analysis. The very

process of interacting with the data means that an individual's narratives can no longer be considered unmediated (Squire *et al.*, 2014). Although the interpretation of the narrative is integral to the ability of a researcher to ascribe meaning to it, Andrews *et al.* (2013) warn of the danger of over-interpreting or misinterpreting meaning. The primary aim of narrative inquiry is to position the storyteller at the centre of the research and, yet, the process of understanding the data is inevitably influenced by the researcher's own personal, professional, and theoretical perspectives (Bruner, 1986; Gadamer, 2008; Andrews *et al.*, 2013).

Over the course of this research, the significance of Greimas' actantial schema on the ability of a researcher to create distance between the preconceptions and assumptions they inevitably bring to the data, and the eventual fruits of the analysis, has become apparent. The structured formality of semiotics, where text is analysed 'according to a set of precise and stable rules' (Fiol, 1990:379), supports an exploration of the data at a more complex and abstract level. It also ensures a consistency and depth of analysis within and across a number of individual narratives. This acts to mediate subjectivity between the analyst and the text and increases the likelihood that the emerging understanding results more from the logical relations identified through the analysis and less from researcher-imposed bias (Fiol, 1990:387). Whilst it cannot be claimed that researcher bias is eliminated altogether, I would now regard this as a fundamental strength of this approach to analysis. I therefore contend that actantial analysis, as applied to narratives in this study, brings a renewed rigour to qualitative research.

6.3 Implications for future research

This study has gone some way towards being able to draw conclusions about the potential influence of ITT programmes on the development of beginning teachers' pedagogic knowledge and beliefs and the extent to which their practice becomes rooted in these understandings and personal values. It is acknowledged, however, that the findings of this study are bounded within the context of the very early stages of a novice teacher's entry into the profession. This is recognised as a distinct limitation of this research and raises some important implications for further exploration.

It is beyond the remit of this research to consider the degree of influence university-based learning will have on the trainees' classroom practice in the longer term. Being able to draw conclusions about the extent to which their values and beliefs manifest themselves in their practice as they emerge from the 'survival' mode of their NQT year, as appeared to be the case in Brouwer and Korthagen's (2005) study, would seem to be important. Equally, although school context emerged as the principal factor inhibiting the practice of the novice teachers in this research, I would question to what extent this might remain the case several years into their careers. For example, I am left speculating whether the school context inhabited by these teachers will be judged to have more or less of an influence on their practice over time and whether, as their professional experience and confidence grow, they will feel able to teach and influence wider school practice in ways which are more congruent with their beliefs. In order to explore the degree of lasting influence experiences in both ITT institutions and school contexts have on the values and practices of PFLs in the beginning years of teaching, more research of a longitudinal nature is required. This thesis, therefore, foregrounds opportunities for further research with this group of trainee participants.

6.4 Concluding thoughts

This study has highlighted some of the limitations to the reach of influence of university and school based learning; yet it is clear that each of these social contexts has a significant but very distinctive contribution to make to beginning teacher development. I would argue, however, that the more polarised 'either/or' discourse of these settings does not adequately allow for these contributions to be fully exploited. This is particularly significant in very recent years when government policy is encouraging the increasing diversification of routes into teaching (Brown, 2017). The findings from this study lead me to strongly suggest that policy makers and those working with beginning teachers should consider an alternative approach to the development of ITT programmes, where theoretically-framed, university-based learning can be interwoven much more closely with classroom based experiences. This, I believe, can only serve to strengthen the influence of ITT and the contribution it can make to the profession as a whole. Finally, I conclude by suggesting that there is much work yet to be done in relation to the development of a 'third space' in ITT as a means of ensuring that the beginning teachers we work with are fully prepared to take a lead in championing and influencing educational change.

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Appendix 1: Project Information Sheet and Consent Form

Primary Foreign Languages: Beginning teachers' narratives of vision and practice.

Information Sheet



Who am I?

My name is Marnie Seymour (Senior Lecturer in Education, University of Winchester). I am carrying out research which explores trainee teachers' developing understanding of the purpose and nature of effective Primary Foreign Languages. This research is part of my PhD thesis.

The focus of the research:

This research will involve working with you as a group of Undergraduate Primary trainees who have elected to pursue the PFL Special Subject modules in order to explore their developing visions and practice with regards to teaching and learning in Primary Foreign Languages.

What data will I collect?

- ❖ Reflections from trainees' on-line 'patches' on the Learning Network from your Year 2 and 3 modules
- ❖ Audio-recordings of individual interviews at the end of your programme and again at the end of your NQT year

Participation: As part of my project I would like to be able to collect a range of data which explores your views and thoughts about Primary Foreign Language teaching and learning over the course of the PFL Special Subject modules. I am, therefore, asking for your consent to take part in this project. It is therefore important for you to understand and know what the project involves. Please take time to read the information on these sheets and do not hesitate to ask if anything is at all unclear.

Results of the study:

The results will be entirely confidential and participants will not be able to be identified should any part of the work be published. If at any time you wish to see data collected and my findings I will be happy to show and discuss

Additional Information:

My project has been approved by the Faculty of Education and the University of Winchester Ethics sub-committees. If you are unhappy or feel that there is anything wrong with this study please contact either me (Marnie Seymour) at the e-mail address below or the Chair of the University RKE Ethics Committee, University of Winchester, Sparkford Road, Winchester SO22 4NR. If you require further information or wish to discuss any part of the project please contact me:

What will happen to the collected data?

All the data (audio-recordings, written reflections etc) will have names removed or changed (anonymised) so that individual trainee will not be able to be identified. All the data will be kept securely in a locked filing cabinet and in encrypted computer files until such time as I no longer need it when it will be destroyed. The data collected will be used only for the purposes of this research project.

Participation in the project is entirely voluntary and you are free to withdraw from this research at any time and without reason.

Trainee consent to participation in this research:

I understand that data from my patchwork reflections, posted on the Learning Network as part of the year 2 and 3 PFL specialism module, and audio-recordings of individual interviews may be collected and used to inform this research. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about this before giving my consent.

I understand that no individuals will be named in this study and that the data collected will be used only for the purposes of this research.

I understand that all data will be stored in a lock filing cabinet and / or in a password encrypted file.

I agree that any data collected as part of my involvement in the PFL Special Subject modules may be used to inform this research.

I understand that I will have access to any data collected during this research.

I am aware that I have the right to withdraw my consent at any stage without prejudice.

Name:

Signed: Date:

Appendix 2: Patchwork Reflections

Coded patchwork texts for the full sample of 12 trainees can be found on the attached memory stick

Appendix 3: Trainee Narratives

The full narratives and associated actantial analysis for the sub sample of 3 trainees can be found on the attached memory stick